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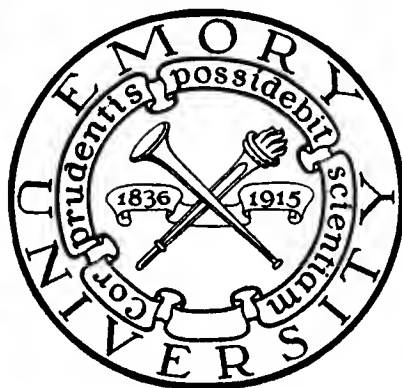
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MRS. BROWN AT MARGATE.



PREFACE.

WE was settin' over our tea, friendly like, at Mrs. Padwick's that Sunday evenin' arter Brown 'ad gone to 'Uddersfield to bury a aunt of 'is stepmother's, as weren't no relation in blood, and 'adn't spoke since the day arter as 'is father were berried, thro' 'er 'avin collared lots of things as she 'adn't no right to, partikler a ring with 'is grandfather's 'air in it, and the family Bible, as they was all born, christened, and berried in the flyleaf on; and was fifteen in family, and now dwindled to Brown and a sister, as is Mrs. Barnes, and I'm sure if they was all like 'er, it's a reglar mussy as they was all cut off in early bloom, as is put on the tombstone of the fust five; for of all the tempers as ever I met with, she's the wildest, and I'm sure if Barnes 'ad give 'er a unlucky blow, as the sayin' is, nobody couldn't 'ave brought it 'ome to 'im, for he's a reglar out and out lamb, poor soul;

but as to 'er, brimstone and fire is mother's milk to 'er. It's a mussy as she's afraid of Brown, so don't let me see much on 'er, as is as well, for if ever there was a woman as my fingers hitched to shy a somethink at 'er 'ead, it's my sister-in-law, not as she's one to mind law nor gospel neither.

Well, Brown he'd gone to this old lady's funeral, and I was a stoppin' along with Mrs. Padwick, thro' Brown not a likin' me to be left alone, thro' a a fancyin' as I shall pitch on to the bars, the same as Mrs. Needem, as set a-dozin' over the fire, and pitched forard agin' the kitchen fire, as burnt the black off the bars into 'er skin, and spiled 'er beauty, not as she ever were a complexion, as is my best part now, thro' never bein' one to use no fancy soaps, nor nothink, and always dried it well with a soft towel, as is 'arf the battle with your skin in my opinion. So Brown won't never go away and leave me alone, thro' me a-dreamin' that frightful, as he says will be sure to end with me a-walkin' in my sleep, as might be into a open drain, or even with the gas pipes up wouldn't be pleasant. Well, we was a-talkin' all manner, and Miss Pilkinton, she were one of the party, tho' a-settin' in 'er bonnet, thro' a-goin' to 'ear some preacher as don't believe in nothink, as is all the go now-a-days; so I says, "Well, for my part, I could stop at 'ome and believe in nothink if so inclined, and don't

want no preacher to persuade me as nothink ain't true."

So Miss Pilkinton, a-seein' as I were a-gettin' a little short over this 'ere preacher, says, "Oh! Mrs. Brown, 'ave you see the Comit?"

I says, "I've see scores I should say."

"Oh!" she says, "that won't do; why there ain't been many in the world. Well," I says, "I certingly never stopped to count 'em; but if you wants me to tell you all I knows about the comit, why you wouldn't never get to 'ear your preacher to-night, for I'm up in comits, as the sayin' is, thro' bein' born the same year as everybody were espectin', and my dear mother a-lookin' out for it while a-'angin out on the Wednesday, as was wisible to the naked eye from 'er back garden, and I've 'eard say was born myself about tea-time on the Friday; and as to it's a-bein' a unlucky day, that can't be 'elped now, tho' I 'ave often said, when things 'ave gone that contrairy as I didn't believe there was any stars out for me to be born under, tho' there might 'ave been atween five and six o'clock in November easy, but must say as I am glad as they've been and found out that there big telescope, as you'll be able to see anybody's stars thro', tho' the size of a pin's 'ead.

Says Miss Pilkinton, "I wonders, Mrs. Brown, as

you ain't never took to fortin'-tellin' with stars, then, as you knows all about 'em."

I says, "I'll tell you for why I ain't been, 'cos, though I've got all the stars at my fingers' end, as I've watched from our back door many a evenin', when they was a little thinkin' who was a lookin' at 'em, I don't like to meddle with wot don't concern me, tho' it is wot often puzzles me wotever is the use on 'em unless to tell your fortune; but law bless me, if you comes to that, wotever is the use of lots on us, and as to Old Sinful, I'm sure he was only born to be a noosance, and make 'isself disagreeable, and that's more than the stars was, poor things, as always looks cheerful, partikler with a frost in the air; and as to the Comit, let it come, as no doubt knows its own way about, and ain't likely to come a-runnin' agin' this world, tho' that's wot parties 'as said."

"Oh! dear no," says Miss Pilkinton, "escuse me, it's the fear as it might come that near as to scorch us up."

"Ah!" I says, "that certingly would be unpleasant; and no doubt them poor creeturs over in Injer is in a fright thro' a-knowin' as it's as 'ot over there as they can bear it already, and as another turn would reglar cook 'em; and that's why I see by the paper as they wos in such terrors over in Calcutter, as is a reg'lar black 'ole already without

no Comits. Not as I'm a bit afraid, tho' I 'ave 'eard say as Comits foretells things as is goin' to 'appen, and that's why they always puts one in the picter to a almanack along with a royal 'earse and plumes, with Britannier, and a lion at 'er feet a-weepin', and a bear in the Evans, with battles and a shipwreck, as 'ave made many a 'art tremble, the same as Mrs. Toplitts dreams, as comes true to a 'air, as dreamt, poor thing, as all 'er teeth come out with a rush into 'er lap as she was a-shellin' peas, and 'er dorter 'ad twins afore the mornin', with Toplitt's own sister a-layin' dead in the 'ouse, as died without a will; so 'er things would 'ave gone to the Crown, not as Queen Wictorier would 'ave give 'em 'ouse room, in my opinion, for a tent bed with a sackin' ain't a thing as I'd allow to cross my doors; and as to that old beuro, why it's my opinion as it were the root of the evil, tho' Mrs. Toplitt 'erself said they was in the paper, and some say as they'll come in the wood; and as to that old woman, I wouldn't 'ave touched a bit or drop in 'er room was it ever so, as 'ad been in it over seven years, and not a pail of water nor a scrubbin' brush laid on to it. But as I was a-sayin', there's a many as think as they knows a good deal as don't; and as to Comits, why they're 'ere and there and everywhere, with their tales a-flourishin', as is certingly werry wonderful, and they do say breaks up the

weather, as I'm certing I 'eard thunder the day before yesterday, close agin the Underground Railway, as that Baker Street station will be my death, for only last week I were obligated to 'ang on to the banisters, with the sulphur down my throat a-chokin' me, let alone the stairs, as took away my breath as it was."

Miss Pilkington, she said, "I were a-goin' to esplain to you the natur of a Comit."

I says, "Oh! thank you, not to-night," 'cos I well remembered 'er a showin' me the use of the globes one night, till nearly twelve, as I couldn't make nothing on; and "wot use are they," I says, "escept to stand on a side board at a boardin' school, as looked like larnin'; and as to makin' me believe as they're the world, and as were like flies a-walkin' all about it, with our 'eads 'angin' downwards, I wouldn't believe sich rubbish not even if it was true; and as to this Comit bein' one as was 'ere 'underds of 'ears ago, 'ow are they to tell, 'cos they couldn't ketch 'im, and make a notch in 'is tail like a fish, as they puts back in the water to know 'im agin by. I respects parties as can tell me all about wot I don't know, but I can't abear them parties as is only a-guessin'; but as to the Comit, why in course it means a somethink as is a 'evanly body, as the sayin' is, so in course must be a-doin' good, and preaps a-clearin' the hair with its tail, as

must want it now and then, like a flue ; for wotever is the hair but a large chimbley arter all ; and all that smoke must coagulate somewheres ; and I'm sure the blacks as falls in London is enuf to smother you, and shows wot must be over'ead ; and what would they be if there wasn't Comits or somethink to clear the hair, as in time would corrode the werry sun 'isself."

So Miss Pilkinton she went off to 'er chapel, and me and Mrs. Padwick set a-talkin', and I says to 'er, " You knows werry well as I don't set up for no book learnin', and as to readin' of the stars, I couldn't not even spell 'em, but that's no reason as any one should look down on me, 'cos them as can is mostly bad characters, like gipsies."

" Ah," she says, " there you're right, cos 'owever are we to know about the stars, when we don't 'ardly understand gas."

I says, " Right you are, and as to gas, tho' we've got a meter under our stairs, I can't make out wot the young man's a-talkin' about as comes to measure it with 'is cubit feet, as he reckons by the thousand."

Says Mrs. Padwick, " Ah ! there's lots of things as we can't check, any more than the stars ; but," she says, " certingly 'Melia Pilkinton is a wonderful gal, for she's read it all for 'erself ; as am no scholar myself, tho' I could work a sampler under seven, and she can't hold a needle now."

"Well," I says, "rubbish about a gal, but no doubt we all 'as our gifts, as the sayin' is, and no doubt as she is that up in them books, and knows Shakespear as if he'd been 'er own father, as they do say is the hact of a wise child."

"Ah," says Mrs. Padwick, "we did ought to know more about 'im, and I do think as we did ought to go and see 'im."

I says, "Well, for my part I'm quite agreeable to go, not to please Miss Pilkinton, as is a reg'lar old fool, a-wearin' of a curl down 'er back, and a book muslin skirt a mile too long, that tumbled for all the world like the dirty clothes bag. So," I says, "we'll go to see Shakespear if you like, but it's my opinion as he's a fal lal lot, and may suit them as is like Miss Pilkinton, a-givin' of theirselves hairs, and a-settin' up to be thought that clever, and talks reg'lar book learnin', but I'm sure ain't got no common senses in 'er 'ead to fancy as she will ever get settled now, as is 'ard on fifty ; but," I says, "I must say as in my opinion she talks a deal of rubbish, 'cos jest see 'ow she went on about that there Shakespear, but any 'ow let's see 'im." And so it were as we went to see 'im that werry week follerin', and we didn't think nothink much about 'im when we 'ad see 'im.

I'm sure we give 'im a good chance, for we went on the quiet, jest to say we'd been, 'cos that fancy

old maid were always a-crowin' and sayin' as he were diwine, and I ain't a-goin' to be set on by 'er, tho' she is that learned and clever; yet, as I says, it ain't pleasant to set down under a amputation of hignorance with Miss Pilkinton a-crowin' Shakespear over you, with 'er red tip to 'er nose, as she turned up at me wisible when I said as I didn't know nothink about 'im nor 'is works."

"Yes," says Mrs. Padwick, "and I'm sure she were a-talkin' Greek to me about 'is plays, thro' never bein' much in the theayter-goin' line, and as to readin' plays, couldn't never make out wot they was a-drivin' at."

I says, "That's me all over; for tho' Brown 'ave got 'is Shakespear, as he says is the finest book in the world arter the Bible as ever were rote, as reglar put my back up, and I says, 'Brown,' I says, 'don't go a-comparin no play-actin' with the secret wollum as is read in church,' I says, 'don't;' so he've give over a-talkin' to me about Shakespear, cos he's a party I never did 'old with, as went to see 'is 'Amlet, as quite upset me, as wasn't nothink more than funerals performed, as the sayin' is."

"Well," says Mrs. Padwick, "I should like to see one of 'is plays well acted."

I says, "I don't care about 'em myself, as is all full of orrers."

I says, "But I don't mind a-givin' on 'im this 'ere one more trial," and that's 'ow it were as we come to go that werry same week on the Toosday. and 'adn't no trouble about a-gettin' in. We could 'ave chose our seats all over the 'ouse.

So when we got in I set a-readin' of the play-bill, as the top on it said a deal about Shakespear and 'is plays, but seemed werry confusin' to me, a-callin' of 'im a swan, and then a bard, and then a poet. So I says to Mrs. Padwick, "Wotever do parties mean by a-callin' on this Shakespear a bard of Aven, as I've 'eard speak of the Tems Aven thro' me and Brown a-goin' down there to see them ion clads, as they calls 'em, but wot they means by clads, goodness knows, as must be Merry-kin for wessels, for that's wot they are, all the world over, and tho' they are ion floats like ducks a-takin' to the water, as the sayin' is, as certingly is wonderful in ion, as will go to the bottom in a gin'ral way, the same as my flat ion, as fell into the water-butth thro' me 'avin' put it to prop up the staircase winder with the pulley broke, as come down like a galanteen as the French is so fond on to cut off their kings and queens' 'eads with, on Old Sinful's thum, as lost 'is nail thro' it, as I do believe weren't the winder, but 'is own orful oaths come 'ome to 'im, for he was a-cussin' and a-blastin' everythink, as in course were 'is own thum-nail included. Not as I

wanted 'im to come in, a-pokin about my premises, but sent to 'im thro' bein' the landlord, for to say as the winders and doors wanted a lookin' to, as in course time will eat into the same as everybody else, and warned 'im when he come in not to tamper with that sash, as were stuck fast, and turned a deaf ear to me, like a old adder-'ead as he is, and jest got served out for 'is pains, and wot else could he expect from a winder with the cords all rotten like tinder.

But in course that ain't nothink to do with Shakespear, nor yet Tems Aven, as were a long day, tho' a fine sight, and I will say as nice cold wittles aboard that steamer as any one need sit down to, and a deal more 'olesome than that Hemp'ror of Roosher a-eatin' of 'is candle. Not as I've troubled my 'ead over Rooshins nor yet Prooshins, for I don't 'old with neither myself, as is reg'lar black tyrants both on 'em, and as to that there Hemp'ror of Roosher bein' in that funk over the Poles a-comin' down on 'im, he can't wonder if they should, when he thinks on the way as he've sent 'underds on 'em to the scaffoldin'. As were in Paris myself when that there Pole dropped on to 'im, and that there Lewy Napoleon, as were a-ridin' together in a carridge, and never was two men in a more mortle funk, tho' I must say myself as I do not care to go under a ladder, as they say is unlucky, even if you

do stop and spit thro' it, as I don't consider the hact of a lady myself, and so I told Mrs. Amber, as were a-walkin' with me, and stopped for to do for luck, as said as it were wot everyone did from Queen Wictorier downwards.

I says, "You may tell that to the Mareens, as the sayin is. Cos I won't believe as Queen Wictorier would stoop to be capable of sich a hact under a ladder, tho', in course she could if she believed it, thro' only bein' flesh and blood like the rest on us."

Says Mrs. Padwick, "Wot 'ave all this got to do with Shakespear?"

"Why," I says, "a great deal, for there was Brown a-goin' on the other night about there not a-bein' a Theyater in London as Shakespear is to be seen at proper, and as the Hemperor of Roosher would build one for 'is dorter alone."

"Well," says Mrs. Padwick, "it does seem singler as this here theayter should be nearly empty when you come to consider it, not as I ever want, for my part, to see no plays as a general rule, nor yet playactors neither, tho' some is wonderful no doubt."

"Well," I says, "I certingly 'ave 'eard my dear mother speak about parties a-standin' at the door all day to see Master Betty, as were a wonderful boy to act as he did, tho', in course, in readin'

about 'im, you'd 'ave took 'im for a gal by the name, as there was 'underds turned away from the doors every night, a-breakin' of their backs a-tryin' to get in to see 'im, as would make you cry your eyes out in repeatin', ' My name is Normal, on the Gram-pians 'ills,' as is wot my dear mother 'eard 'im do, tho' 'er youngest brother Sam did it nearly quite as well, and was always afraid as he'd take to the stage; and so he would, no doubt, only 'ad a fancy for the sea, as made 'im run away aboard a man-o'-war, as was lost in a 'urrykin off the West Hinges, thro' his cap a-blowin' off up a loft, as he over-balanced 'isself in a-tryin' to ketch at it, as is the way as a many lives is lost, as is wot I always says about the 'ouse bein' a-fire, as," I says, " let it burn so long as you gets out on it as quick as you can all safe, and don't be ridiculous a-goin' back arter anythink, as were 'ow Mrs. Sloman got burnt, poor creetur, as 'ad got out all right, and took and remembered 'er silver teapot in the back parlour cupboard, as she run in to save, and wasn't never 'eard on no more, nor yet a westment on 'er found in them ruins, as some says was all a plant, thro' 'im 'avin' set the 'ouse a fire, and 'eavily insured arter gettin' everythink out on it; and as she made 'er way thro' the back premises over the palins, as were only a brickfield, and were seen weeks arterwards alive and well aboard of a hemigrants' wessel

a-layin' off Gravesend, tho' they mourned 'er dead in 'er father's 'alls, as the sayin' is, as didn't seem like death, for 'er own sisters 'usban', as were in the ready-made tailorin' line on the oppersite side, never as much as put a shetter up for 'er; not as ever I bothers myself with them family matters, as it's best not to, for you never gets no thanks; the same as Mrs. Mogg, the broker's lady, as I went in myself and ketched Mogg a-layin' into with the leg of a chair, a-sayin' as he'd teach 'er to be in licker, as I took by the 'air and shoved into a easy-chair, and set on 'is lap till she could get out of 'is way, as bit and tore at me from behind like a wild beast, but kep' my ground for all that, and when I did get up, he certingly were pretty nigh done for; and wot did that woman do but turn round on me arterwards, and say as it were me as 'ticed 'er into drinkin' 'abits; so," I says, "next time I 'ope he'll take the poker to you," as never 'ad a drain with that woman in my life, and only knowed 'er in passin' to say good mornin', and once bought a towel 'orse on, and that time as I ketched 'im a-'ittin' 'er about only went into the shop to ask the price of a second-'and chest of drawers, and 'eard the row at the back of the shop, and got a blow under my left shoulder, as turned as black as ink with that chair leg afore I could part 'em by a-settin' on 'im. But as to them playactors, they

are clever no doubt; not as I thinks Betty a pretty name myself, not for boy nor gal neither, and well remembers a party as were the name of Betty Mundy, as were of a serious turn, and 'eld with the Methody way, and come to a untimely hend thro' bein' run over in licker in the Uxbridge Road, poor thing, by a broad wheel waggin a-goin' up 'ill. So I always considers Betty a melancholy name, tho' I don't know wot were the end of Betty Martin, as some says is all my eye, tho' I've 'eard my dear mother often talk about Maria Martin as were murdered in the Red Barn, as they made into a play as preaps were rote by Shakespear, cos all as I've see of 'is'n is chuck full of murders, jest for all the world like the perlice news, for I'm sure never in my life did I see anythink more orful than that there 'Amlet, as murdered 'is own father, and 'acked and cut the 'ole family about shameful, as they give 'im pison at last for to put 'im out of 'is misery, the same as our cat, poor thing, as was convulsed for days afore I'd let 'em do it, as was sixteen years old if a 'our. But law, 'Amlet ain't nothink to that there Otheller feller, as we see that night, me and Mrs. Padwick, a nasty niggerly beast, not as I pities that young fieldmale a bit, as I consider let 'erself down in runnin' away from a good 'ome and a kind father with a blackguard like that, tho' I've knowed parties myself as 'ave done as bad, for there was

Jane Manders as took a fancy to the Cymbals in the band, as were as black as a coal, and wore a turbin like a 'eathen Turk; and it must 'ave run in the family, for 'er own sister went off with the coloured Tambourine in the same regiment, and was fust cousin to the Cymbals, with 'air like wool, tho' certingly teeth like the driven snow, as showed well agin 'is black skin, and broke their father's 'art, poor man, as were of a pious turn in the coal-shed line, as never 'eld up 'is 'ead agin, and was fined over and over agin for false weights, as no doubt thinkin' of 'is dorders confused him that dreadful as he didn't know what he was about, and never could count the bundles of wood right, even when they was both at 'ome with 'im. Not as I should ever consider one of them play'ouses 'omes comfortable myself, as is all show and paint, and don't seem to 'ave no roof on proper, besides bein' open at the sides; and tho' that young gal's father were no doubt fond on 'er, he certingly did dress werry outlandish, with a goat's beard gummed on for to add to his 'ears, and make 'im look older, as in course made that Dook, as he were took before, pity 'im all the more. As to that nigger chap, he reglar brazened it out, and was, I considers, werry cheeky over it, as I don't believe as the Lord Mare would 'ave stood; and then, when she come in without a bit of bonnet on, nor nothink for to 'ide 'er

face, and dressed out a deal too fine for any one to walk through the streets, as is in trouble afore the beaks. I must say as I didn't fancy 'er not from the fust, as were all painted and floured up, and as to bein' young, I said to Mrs. Padwick, she'll never see no change out of two pounds, as the sayin' is, and must 'ave been on 'er last legs, as the sayin' is, and that's why, in my opinion, as she took up with that nigger, as I knowed from the fust were a match as wouldn't never turn out well. But of all the born fools as ever I see it were that nigger, as took and believed a lot of rubbish wot a feller in the name of Yargo took and told 'im all about 'is good lady, and a party as they called Cashier. So I says to Mrs. Padwick, "That there nigger's a fool, and wot-ever is that Yargo a-drivin' at, for I'm sure if she were a widder, nobody wouldn't want to marry 'er, so why not let that negro gent 'ave 'er in peace and quiet, and not a-goin' on a-settin' 'em by the ears." Not but it's wot I think as he were sick and tired on 'er, and she couldn't abear 'im, cos a friend of 'ern called 'im a filthy bargain; and in course them niggers never washes, cos whyever should they, jest the same as I've knowed parties myself as always wore black stockin's to save washin', as is wot I wouldn't never allow no gal as ever lived with me to do. Any'ow them two didn't get on fust rate as man and wife, cos when they was a-goin' to hemi-

grate to somewheres, he went fust, and let them other fellers bring 'er by another wessel as follered, as don't look well in 'usban and wife in my opinion ; and if ever me and Brown was to hemigrate, we'd certingly go together or not at all, as is 'ow Amber and 'is wife come to be parted a-goin' to New Zealand ; but wotever could he espect, a-sendin' 'er by one wessel, and 'im a-goin round by 'Merryker ; so both went wrong, and never met no more in this world, for he never got no further than 'Merryker, as the drink soon settled 'im, and she met 'er hend thro' a-settlin down at the diggins, and were never 'eard on no more, thro' a-changin' 'er name, so in course never got no letters, and might 'ave come in to a fine property thro' the railroad a-comin' thro' 'er father's premises, as was freehold, but in course come to the Crown thro' bein' no 'airs born in wedlock, an old beast.

But wot put me out most with that play were sich foolish ways as they hacted over a 'ankercher, as that there fieldmale took out of 'er pocket for to bind the nigger's 'ead up with, thro' 'im a-sayin' as he'd got a 'eadache. He were put out, wouldn't 'ave the 'ankercher on, and throwed it off, and then jest arter that in comes a party as picks it up and let's that feller Yargo take it, and then he goes to that nigger and stuffs 'im up with a lot of lies about that poor thing 'avin give 'im the 'ankercher.

“Why,” I says, “you black idjot, you, why you ’ad it on your ’ead not more than ten minnits ago, so must ’ave knowed as your wife never ’adn’t give it away.”

Not as I cared a bit about that there Dusty-moaner, as they called ’er, for she was a bold thing, and kep’ a-lookin’ out of the corners of ’er eyes at parties in the theayter, as much as to say, “Ain’t I a-doin’ of it brown.”

So I says to Mrs. Padwick, “In my opinion she ain’t much account,” not as I considers as that nigger ’ad any right for to call ’er them orful bad names as he did, and if I’d been ’er I’d ’ave took and twisted ’is turbin off and rung ’is neck with it in a twinklin’, as the sayin’ is.

But law they was a low lot, for they got a-drinkin’ and fightin’ till there was a reg’lar row in the middle of the night, as brought that nigger out of ’is bed, as were no doubt wot put ’im that awful out of temper; for if he didn’t go back jest arterwards and kill ’is wife on the spot. It give me sich a turn when I see ’er in ’er bed-room all in white, and I says, “I do ’ope as that negro black won’t come in afore she’s in bed, cos he’ll startle ’er so, as was ’er opinion, no doubt, for she got into bed without undressin’, and ’owever she could sleep in that stiff gound, without no night-cap on, and all that book muslin a-stickin’ up, I can’t think. Well, into bed she gets, and in comes that nigger.

I says to Mrs. Padwick, "Mark my words, he means mischief, as sure as my name is Martha," and right my words proved sure enuf, for he took and rolled 'is eyes all over the place, and then drored 'is sword and blowed out the light; and then if the black-'arted willin, instead of killin' the poor thing in 'er sleep, didn't take and wake 'er up and begin a-talkin' good to 'er, a-askin' 'er if she'd said 'er prayers. I says, "Much he cares about prayers, a 'eathen beast." Whyever she didn't ring the bell and send for the perlice I can't think; but no she didn't, but like a big fool kep' a-layin' in that bed a-listenin' to 'im a-jawin' till he got tired of talkin' and took and smothered 'er in cold blood fust, and stabbed 'er arterwards, and then took and opened the door to that Yargo's wife as told 'im 'ow he'd been took in by 'er 'usband, as 'ad been a-gammonin' 'im. Them words of 'ern made 'im roar out like any bull, a-sayin' over and over agin as he was a fool.

I says, "That you certingly are, my boy," and to prove 'is words if he didn't take and stab 'issself arter Yargo 'ad come in and said 'ow he'd sold 'im. And that Yargo he wos a erritable temper, for if he didn't take and run 'is good lady through, jest for openin' 'er mouth. So there was a pretty kettle of fish, as the sayin' is, and all thro' runnin' away with a nigger.

But law, there's some whites as is quite as bad as niggers, tho' there ain't many as will take and kill their wives on mere 'earsay, as the sayin' is, escept in licker, as is no escuse in my opinion. But all as I've got to say is as that there nigger was either drunk or foolish all thro', for she wasn't worth runnin' away with, not from the werry beginnin', and no doubt if she didn't mind a nigger 'er father'd 'ave only been too 'appy, cos, as I said afore, she couldn't never 'ave been no beauty, not as that Yargo need 'ave called 'er a green-eyed monster, to set 'er 'usban' agin 'er, as were decided long in the tooth, as the sayin' is.

So wotever parties makes a fuss about Shakespear for, I can't think, as is werry like the Newgate Calendar, all murders and orrers; and all as I've got to say is that I think as Shakespear might 'ave let them things alone, cos as to it's bein' a warnin' to young gals not to take up with niggers, why they never won't listen to no warnin's, so must do as they likes, and 'Evan 'elp their taste, as the sayin' is, cos for my part I'd jest as soon fondle a 'edge-og as a nigger—a nasty woolly-'eaded black beast. So don't talk to me about Shakespear improvin' your mind, as ain't a party as I 'olds with, nor none of them plays, and wouldn't never let our Joe go to see Jack Sheppard, as I considers a immoral character, and a werry bad esample for a boy, as is why I

don't 'old with the Perlice News, nor yet nothink as 'ave that tendernessy to undermin' your morals. So none of your Shakespears for me, cos tho' murderin' your wife is all the go now-a-days, yet it ain't wot I'd ever bring a child of mine up to, and likes to stick to the good old fashions myself, and don't like to see murder made light on, nor yet a wife maimed for life and only six months for it; but as to Shakespear, he wants to make out as murderers is fine fellers as everyone did ought to imitate, as I don't 'old with, and I'm sure as it were thro' a goin' to see that play as we come to see that Comit so clear, and shall be thankful when it's gone agin, 'cos I can't abear anythink like that a-hangin' over your 'ead. And I'm sure when Mrs. Padwick come into my room next day quite pale, a-sayin' as Miss Pilkinton were below, as 'ad come to tell us as the hend of the world might appear any hinstant, it give me a turn at fust.

So I says, "No doubt; but as we can't none of us tell when the hinstant is to be, it don't much matter."

So says Mrs. Padwick, "Don't sneer, Martha, that's a dear."

I says, "Me sneer! as is the last of my thoughts; not as I'm a-goin' to be frightened about the hend of the world, 'cos I knows it must come soon to me." Not as I'm fool 'ardy over that, and 'ave my fears, and never shan't forget the night as the chimbly

sweep come down the rong chimbly with 'is ramo-
neur into our room, as I made sure were the devil
'isself, and says to Brown in my fright, "We're
come for," as made 'im say, "You've got a nice
consence, Mrs. Brown," as made me think more
serous ever since, thro' a-knowin' as Comit or no
Comit my time will come. And all as I 'opes is as
I may be ready, and then not all the Comits as ever
were born wont scarify me, not if they 'ad a thousan'
tales behind 'em.

MRS. BROWN AT MARGATE.

I SAYS to Mrs. Padwick, I says, "Mark my words, if this 'ere Comit don't bring meltin' moments, as the sayin' is, cos well I remembers my dear mother a-talkin' about the 'eat the year as I were born;" and as to that Comit as come last week, I shan't never forget the 'eat as I suffered from in makin' of my jams, as I were a-stirrin' over the ionin' stove, when my 'air slipped off with the 'eat, and fell slap into the lot, as were my own fault, for I'd been and loosened the string as it were tied round my head with, so in course that lot were spilte, as I were a-goin' to throw it away, when the gal says,

"Law, mum, mother 'll be thankful for it."

"Well," I says, "take it in welcome." But I couldn't in my consence give that jam to anybody; as can't bear a 'air in anything as I eats, let alone a 'ole front, tho' it were nearly new, and quite done for; tho' I did take and soak in strong soda and water, as took all the colour out, and thro' my 'air bein' a dark brown all my life, I weren't a-goin' to turn out flaxen in the hevenin' of my days, as the sayin' is.

I did jest dry it, and shake it out, for to take in the manglin' that hevenin' as the gal 'ad gone to see 'er mother, and took the jam with 'er, and Mrs. Challengins' niece didn't know me, and said as she took me for my eldest dorter. And when I says, "Go along, Mary Ann, with your rubbish," she says, "Well, all as I've got to say is, as it takes twenty years off you, if not thirty; and if I was you, mum, I should dress more lighter altogether."

I says, "I most certingly shall if this 'eat lasts, partikler in goin' to Margate."

"Law," says Mrs. Padwick, "wot a many years you 'ave been to Margate, to be sure, Martha, and I ain't far behind you."

I says, "That you ain't, as 'ave in gen'ral contrived a week," tho' a slave to 'er lodgins in a gen'ral way.

"Well," she says, "I do 'ope to go this year."

I says, "Come along; and now, as the 'ot weather 'ave set in, let's take time by the firelock, as the sayin' is."

"Ah," she says, "but 'ow about the Comit, as Mrs. Wybrer were a-talkin' about, as is likely to put a hend to the world, leastways so 'er minister says, and he did ought to know, thro' 'avin' 'ad that one chapel over thirty years, and a good livin' he's made out on it, and, in course, can't 'ave no object in sayin' it's goin' to be burnt up, and afore

'is pew rents is due, as would be a 'eavy loss to him."

I says, "Rubbish about 'im a-tellin' wot the Comit's a-goin' to do."

"Well," says Mrs. Padwick, "I shouldn't like to go out of town till I knows which way it s a-goin' to turn out, as I shouldn't like to 'ave the 'ouse a-fire with my back turned."

I says, "I'd rather my 'ouse were burnt with my back turned, then I shouldn't run no risk of my body bein' burnt with it, as is wot some parties says did ought to be done with all the dead, as is not wot I calls decent berrial; and it's only them 'eathen Germins as wants it, and for my part they might burn that old Beastmark in welcome, and shouldn't much care if they burnt old Willyam along with 'im."

Jest then in who should come but Mrs. Wybrer and Miss Pilkinton, as was both on 'em up to their eyes in the Comit. Miss Pilkinton she've got wot she calls a strong-minded natur', and redicules about the hend of the world; but poor Mrs. Wybrer, she's werry serous, and were soon a-weepin' into 'er tea, over the hend of the world, and set poor Mrs. Padwick all of a tremble, as said, "Oh! Martha, I wouldn't leave 'ome with the hend of the world a-'angin' over me."

"Oh!" says Miss Pilkinton, "what superstition," as made poor Mrs. Wybrer sob agin.

"Well," I says, "I ain't no minister, nor yet no scolard, for to read the stars with a tellyscope, but 'ave been taught from a child as the hend of the world is always a-'angin' over, comits or no comits."

"Ah!" says Mrs. Wybrer, "but comits is signs as our minister were a-sayin' last Wednesday night, a-takin' tca with us, and is a-goin' to preach all about it Thursday hevenin', as I wish you'd come and 'ear 'im, Mrs. Brown."

I says, "I ain't no objection, but am a-goin' to Margit Saturday if the weather 'olds up;" as wouldn't go to sea in a storm, as I considers presumption in any one, jest like that poor creetur as called 'isself the flyin' man, and come that cropper out of the balloon as didn't ought to be allowed, and 'owever 'is poor wife could stand and see 'im do it I can't think, for I couldn't abear to see Brown go out on the parrypitch of our 'ouse when the chimbly was a fire, as the man as were a-helpin' 'im poured a bucket of water down Old Sinful's chimbly by mistake, and flooded 'is front bedroom.

So Mrs. Padwick she said as she should like to go and 'ear that minister too; but Miss Pilkinton said she knew all about it, as she'd 'eard a lecture at the Pollytechnic, where a party showed 'em all the 'evanly bodies in a 'Norrery.

"Oh!" I says, "that's all right; but I'm sure no parties at the Pollytechnic never went into the

hend of the world, tho' in course it might be done easy with them dissolvin' views, as is werry lovely, and seems to fade into nothink, and come out some-think else quite fresh. I shan't never forget a-goin' along with Mrs. Wybrer for to 'ear that there minister of 'ern as is over the water, and me and Mrs. Padwick went for a early cup of tea with 'er, as was a brilin' journey, for them omblebuses strikes like a fiery furniss a-gettin' in, and not a winder as will opin, tho' thro' the end there's a thoro' draft, all but wot is kep' out by the coachman's legs a-inter-wenin.' Mrs. Wybrer she 'ave berried Wybrer over 'leven years, but sticks to 'er weeds, as I 'oners 'er, for tho' they did live a cat and dog life, as the sayin' is, yet respects 'is mem'ry, as left 'er comfortable thro' bein' in the funeral feather line, as is why she likes the Blackfriars Road, as she've got a share in still, besides money in the funs. She never were a beauty, tho' money of 'er own, and one leg shorter than the other from 'er birth, tho' she do tell a tale about a-fallin' off a pony in 'er Pa's Park, as I'm sure a clothes 'orse were the only one as he ever owned, thro' bein' nothink but in the ilc and pickle line near the Old Kent Road, as I remembers the shop well, that dirty 'ole as I wouldn't 'ave 'ad a sarcer of pickles out of it, as might be all werry well for brick dust and whitin' and couldn't 'urt the blacklead. But, as the sayin' is, where

there's muck there's money, and Old Crewsin, 'er father, cut up well, as 'ad fifteen 'underd pounds in 'er own name in the stocks, as is where 'er father did ought to 'ave been put over and over agin, as is the proper place for short weights. Well, he's gone, and 'is dorter she's a bit of a skinflint, as 'ave got one gal, a poor, sore-eyed Sindereller of a thing, as is a reglar drudge, and 'ates the chapel as 'er mother will take 'er to of a Sunday three times, with always a cold dinner, and not much of that I've 'eard say. I didn't think much of Mrs. Wybrer's tea, as she'd put soder in to draw the 'ard water; and as to thin bread and butter, with salt butter, give me a dry crust fust. I never did feel it 'otter than when we started for that chapel, and were obligated to 'ave a bottle of ginger beer on the way, as I 'ad a dash of sperrits in, thro' its bein' kep' in ice, as I were afraid might strike to the 'art, and send the blood to my 'ead if took too sudden."

This put Mrs. Wybrer out, as is one of them reg'lar teatotal old killjoys. So I says to 'er, "If you don't 'old with sperrits, don't touch 'em, not even by mistake, but leave your naybours to do as they pleases over it." I knowed as that were a nasty one for 'er, as the sayin' is, cos I'd ketched 'er with the bottle to 'er lips in Mrs. Padwick's front parlour only the week afore, thro' me a-comin' in sudden from the back room, as is foldin' doors,

as 'ad been left ajar, and the sperrits left out on the sheffineer. Not as I meant to throw it in 'er teeth, as the sayin' is, but I do 'ate 'umbug. She give a sob, and said, "As she didn't mind a-bein' traduced by the world, as she 'oped might be forgiven."

It wasn't a over cool place that chapel, and werry full, as didn't begin till jest on eight, and tho' not far from Mrs. Wybrer, we was a good wile a-gettin' there, thro' 'er foot, as she wears a ion ring on, like a pattern, as is a old fashioned way of bein' lame, and a cork sole would answer jest the same, as is lighter. Well, when we got to the chapel there was plenty of time, and Mrs. Wybrer's seats was jest behind the minister's pew, as 'is good lady comes into out of the westry, jest afore they begun a-singin', as I could swear as I 'eard a cork bein' drawn, as sounded like bottle beer. Mrs. Wybrer said as she were 'is second.

"Ah!" I says, "and she's got on wonderful deep mournin', and noble mournin' too," and was all crape and bugles, so I says to Mrs. Wybrer, "Is she in mournin' for 'is fust?"

"Oh! dear no, it's for 'er father, as were a soap biler; and died worth a plum, as he left between 'is two dorders."

"Oh!" I says, "indeed. I should 'ave thought he'd been a grocer."

She give a smile as showed she'd forgive my illudin' to the bottle, as showed a Christshun sperrit.

So she says, "Bless your 'art, 'is fust ain't dead."

"What?" I says, "you don't mean to say as he's a Mormin."

She says, "Oh no, but she were too worldly, so he got a diworce."

"Oh!" I says, "then this 'ere good lady 'ad better look out, for she seems fond of dress, as you could tell by 'er mournin' "

Well, jest then, that minister he come in, and they struck up a 'im, as he kep readin' of the wersed on, as Mrs. Wybrer said he'd been and composed out of 'is own 'ead. I didn't say nothink, but thinks to myself, as he did ought to live and let live, as wasn't fair in 'im to do everythink, and take the bread out of a poor man's mouth, as might write 'ims. They all begun a-singin' and a-bawlin', and there were a old feller, as were a-settin' beside me, as reg'lar 'owled, as couldn't 'ear what a row he were a-makin' thro' 'avin' of 'is ears full of wool. Well, he did shout, and when I looked round, offered me 'is 'im book to look over, as reg'lar cricked my neck, tho' I didn't like to refuse, thro' 'im meanin' it perlite, but when he sung out, "As this is 'eaven below," I thinks to myself, well, I'm sure, I 'opes not, for I should be sorry to 'ave

to set and look over your 'im book for ever and ever with you, a-shoutin' in my ear like this.

Well, arter a bit, that minister he took and prayed for us—as in course saved time and trouble, but as I didn't know wot he were a-goin' to say next, I couldn't jine in with 'im. Then he took and preached, as certingly were beautilful words at fust, but he werry soon got to rantin' and a-'oller-in' about suddin destruction and a-sayin' fly.

So I says to Mrs. Padwick, in a whisper, while he stopped to wipe 'is face, "I don't believe as he considers this ere chapel safe, as in course would stop in 'is pulpit, as is 'is post, till the werry last, if it were all a-fallin' about 'is ears," and I give 'er a bit of a wink.

She give a smile; and then he went on a-lookin' at me, and a-sayin', "Oh! the burdin of the flesh, as is fleshy.'"

So I thinks that's rude; but if he wants to talk about flesh, he may as well look at 'ome, for 'is number two's a porpus, if ever I see one; so it don't do for 'im to talk about flesh, for she was a-pantin' thro' fat.

Well, it were a lowery sort of a hevenin', and I felt thunder in the hair, and it got dark sooner than usual, so he 'ad to 'ave the gas for 'is pulpit, but not turned up 'igh, and so they did with jest a few jets about the chapel, and then didn't he go on.

Oh ! law, 'ow he did lay it on about wengence on the world, and as nobody 'ardly couldn't 'ope to escape it. Ah, thinks I to myself, I suppose your pew-'olders is all right : not but wot he did say as we wasn't to trust to forms, as I'm sure the seats in them pews wasn't no better, except where the minister's lady were a-settin' in front of me, and one oppersite, as were green baise, for the deekins, as Mrs. Wybrer told me afore the preachin' begun ; but she says, " It's all goin' to be pulled down."

I says, " A good thing too ; for that green baise, as is the colour of a stale cabbidge leaf, must be full of moth, if not wuss."

Well, all of a suddin, that minister got frightful excited, and throwed 'is arms all about like a wind-mill, and then he 'ollers, " It's a-comin', this werry night ;" and jest then there were a clap of thunder. " Ah !" he says, " Light, light, light."

Well, the gas as 'ad been kep' werry low, shot up tremenjous at them words, with another clap of thunder bustin' out.

Mrs. Wybrer's gal give a scream ; up jumps Mrs. Wybrer and puts 'er ion patten slap down on that old 'owler's foot, as were a-settin' between 'er and me. I've heard owls in my time, but no wild beast of the field never give tung like that old feller, as throwed out both 'is harms, and 'it right and left, a-ketchin' Mrs. Wybrer a reglar buck'orse

in the face, as the sayin' is ; and brought down 'is double fistes on the minister's lady's 'ead, and sent bonnet, chinyon, and all a-flyin' She give a yell, and the minister he give a rush backards to come to 'er, and missin' of 'is step come over the banisters of that pulpit, and fell smack among 'is congregation, as 'ad all rushed out of their pews, some a-shoutin' "Fire!" "'Elp," "Turn it off at the main," as were done ; and there we all was a-strug-ghn' in total darkness, escept a flash of lightnin'

I'd been and fell on all fours at the bottom of the pew, and that old 'owler he were under me ; and Mrs. Wybrer, she were a-settin' on my back, with 'er ion patten fixed firm in that old man's calf, as yelled like bulls at bay, and I could 'ear that minister a-owlin' and a-weepin' with 'is good lady.

It's a mussy as anyone is alive to tell the tale, for the fightin' and screamin' was orful ; and a smell of sperrits that strong that I says to myself, "Why, they must all 'ave 'ad flat bottles with 'em, as the corks is come out on simultaneous ; and if any one comes in they'll take us for teatotalers. Jest at that momint I pitched Mrs. Wybrer off my back and up I gets and 'eard sich a row, and in come a lot of water at the winders all over everybody.

I says, "Mussy on us, it's the hinjins as they're a-pumpin'. Jest then that old 'owler got up and give a wiolent plunge and sent Mrs. Wybrer and

me both flyin' out of the pew, and it's well as them injins was stopped jest then, for if they'd gone on a-playin' as they calls it we should 'ave been all drowned, for we was reglar between two stools, as the sayin' is, thro' fear of both fire and water. And I'm sure it's a mussy as nobody didn't come in while the gas were on suddin with a light, for if they 'ad the Comit wouldn't 'ave 'ad no work left to do in this 'ere ehapel; but as luek would 'ave it some one opened all the winders and turned off the taps, and then lighted a gas up in the gallery, as restored order, and we all got out safe, tho' I 'eard arterwards as the minister's nose bled frightful, and one of 'is eyes as black as a coal, poor feller; and 'is lady's dress were ruined with 'is gore, tho' water had been played all over it.

So when I got back to Mrs. Padwick's, as we got a cab all the way, I says, "No more preachin' about comits for me, as am wet thro' and pretty nigh stunned with the row, as I do think their singin' is wuss than their screamin', and as to their minister he's a born idjot, tho' no doubt he means well, poor feller."

As to that fool Mrs. Wybrer, she took and rote that abusive letter to Mrs. Padwick, a-sayin' as I'd been the death, pretty nigh, of a elder, and 'ad kicked 'er off my back like a bloated old cart 'orse, as I was, as I don't consider langwidge for the

elect, as she calls 'erself; and all as I've got to say is, if that's the sort as I see in that chapel, I don't want to belong to 'em, as is a 'owlin' set of 'umbugs, without no sense in their 'eads, and will come to a bad end, some day, with their wagaries, as is wot I don't 'old with over none of them serous subjics sich as comits and the like. And all as I pitied were that poor Mrs. Wybrer's own gal, as 'ad give the alarm' thro' a-feelin' that 'ot as thought 'erself a-singein', so give a scream, and come over to Mrs. Padwick.

So I says to 'er, " My dear friend, don't you give way to no fears about no comits nor yet the hend of the world; but jest recollect when you goes to bed of a night as the hend of the world may come to you afore mornin', and try to live accordin'; and as to your minister, I considers as 'is conduc' were ridiculus as well as rong; for wherever could he 'ave run to if it 'ad been the hend? cos when that comes there weren't be no goin' out of town to avoid it, nor not even no sea woyage as you can get away by.

Not as I'm a-goin' to Margit myself for to get out of the way of the Comit, but because if it is to be seen anywheres, Margit must be the spot, as is all sea room, and no land for to shet out the view. 'Tho' I was a-readin' in one of them papers, as 'ave sent a special for to watch

it, as it will be most wisible in the middle of the day, as is when I 'ave 'eard say you can see the stars if you goes down to the bottom of a well, as wouldn't suit me. Not as I minds much wot parties says over them things as they don't know nothink about, for I'm sure the way as they all were a-goin' on for everlastin' about this ere Comit at Mrs. Padwick's, were enuf to drive anyone mad over their tea, and glad I was when Brown 'rote to say as he'd be 'ome Friday evenin' So I said to Mrs. Padwick, I'll go 'ome on the Thursday, as she didn't like me a-doin', and would 'ave it as little Ann Larkins, as is 'er 'arf sister's niece, and lives two doors off Mrs. Wybrer, should go with me, as I didn't want, for she's got a orful cough with 'er backbone crooked, poor thing, so can't be very 'andy, and is apt to kick in 'er sleep, and that terrified about the Comit as she 'adn't slep' for nights thro' a-thinkin' on it, as is all Miss Pilkinton's fault, as is a reg'lar free-thinker now, and will hend in a loonatic, in my opinion; and got a-talkin' afore that child all manner about it bein' a good thing when the world did come to a end, as is only jest 'er spite, cos young Tilwell, as is a decorator, won't look at 'er, and quite right too, cos if she 'ave got thirty pounds a year she's full as many years 'is elder; and a nice lookin' young man too, and never paid 'er no more attention than 'andin' 'er tea-cup, as nobody can't

say is a sign of love at fust sight, for 'er to 'ave 'issteries over. And, I says to 'er, it's downright 'rong in you to talk like that afore a gal of 'er age, as is nat'rally frightened thro' bein' a cripple, so in course feels as she couldn't run away from danger, not as there'll be much use in runnin' when the world's all in flames everywhere, as I told that poor gal, and did all as I could to pacify; but she wouldn't listen to no reason, a-sayin' she'd 'eard all about it at chapel. So I sent 'er 'ome the fust thing Friday mornin', cos she wouldn't go to bed all Thursday night, but set on the stairs with 'er bonnet on, and 'er night things in a bundle ready to rush out of the 'ouse with the fust alarm. So I says to 'er, "My dear, there won't be no alarms fust nor last when that day comes, but all over in a instant." So I says, "You go 'ome to your mother, and tell 'er from me not to send you to them rantin' chapels, as is a ignorant lot, and only gets their livin' out of them as they can gammon with their Comits, and their judgments; and much they knows about it."

But really that poor gal's terrors and the chapel row did upset me reglar, as I showed plain, for when Brown come in, the fust thing as he said were "Hallo! old gal, you looks queerish, why, wotever's up?"

"Well," I says, "Brown, I will not deceive you,

as I never 'ave done 'ard on forty year now, and must say as I feels rather upset over this Comit, cos tho' it is all them millions of miles off, yet who knows 'ow quick it mayn't travel, with a tail as is millions long, partikler if the wind was to set that way, as is 'ow it is as parties aboard wessels, as weren't expected for months, 'as been known to 'eave in sight of land, without no pilot aboard, as is 'ow a many's been wrecked in sight of 'ome, as is wot this ere Comit would do with us afore you could say Jack Robison, as the sayin' is, the same as poor Mrs. Russil's own sister, as were a-goin' to Australier with 'er fam'ly, and never got further than Gravesend, as is only part of the way, thro' a telegram a-comin' to say as 'is father were dead, and he'd come into the property, as they adn't been on speakin' terms for years, as I considers 'ighly disgraceful in a son, and the old man 'ad made a will, not leavin' of 'im a shillin' only adn't the strength to sign it; so in course they adn't no occasion to hemigrate, but the wessel were under weigh, as the sayin' is, and adn't 'ardly time to get ashore."

Brown says, "Wotever are you a-talkin' about?"

"Why," I says, "the Comit, in course, as everybody's got their mouths full on, as may swaller us all up any moment."

“ Ah ! ” says Brown, “ werry like a whale. ”

“ Ah ! ” I says, “ there you goes with your play-actin’ books, as ain’t things for to read about the end of the world in ; as is a serous subje, and one as Shakespear never thought on. ”

He says, “ Didn’t he tho’, he jest did, and rote about it too ; but wot ’arm ’ave the Comit done you as you should be so down on it ? ”

I says, “ Don’t talk foolishness, Brown, don’t ; wotever ’arm could a comit do me, as must burn up all the world a-gettin’ at me ; and as to its bein’ the hend of the world, why, in course I don’t believe that, or I shouldn’t never be a-unpickin’ this ere alpacker to wear, when the weather gets cooler ; and it would be all rubbish for young Purver to say as ’im and Mary Ann Glanders was to get married in the spring ; and I’m sure we won’t order in no coals for next winter, now as they’re down agin to even money, as the sayin’ is ; and whyever should they want to pull down Northumberland ’Ouse, as I see the lion a-bein’ took from off ’is place over the gate, in passin’ by, last week, and was a-thinkin’ ’ow my poor grandmother would stare if she could look up. ”

“ Ah ! ” says Brown, “ if your ’ead never akes till the comit runs agin the hearth, you’ll live long and die ’appy, old gal. ”

I says, “ Brown, don’t be a-talkin’ perfane, cos

there's no tellin', and some ministers says it will."

He says, "In course no one can't tell, and that's why parties shows their hignorance over it, in preachin' them sermons, when the werry book as they're a-preachin' from says, as nobody don't know when it's to 'appen. But come, old gal, let's 'ave supper, for I ain't 'ad anythink since breakfast, but a biscuit and cheese, with a glass of ale."

I says, "It'll be up in a minit, as is a rump steak pie, cos I thought if your train wasn't punctual, we could 'ave it cold."

I never see a man enjoy 'is supper more 'arty than Brown, partikler after a journey; and when he'd got 'is pipe and drop of grog, why he set there a-lookin' like a king.

"Well," he says, "Martha, anythink 'appened since I've been gone?"

"Well," I says, "nothink in partikler, beyond the Comit, as I must say I thinks means more than you seems to think, and 'ave been known afore now to 'ang over cities with the plague a-ragin', and in general foretells a somethink, as is why I never did like that Shar a-comin' last year; and when I 'eard this year as the Hemperor of Roosher were a-comin' along with the Hemperor of Morrocker, it give me quite a turn, and then felt uneasy thro' them dreams, as 'aunted me all the spring thro', as you did used

to larf at ; and now, in course, they're all out with this Comit, cos everyone said as it were somethink in the hair affectin' my 'ead ; but 'ow was I to tell as there were a comit up in the 'evans, 'angin' over us ; but the moment I 'eard on it, I says my dreams out ; and that time as you ridiculed my dreams over Queen Wictorier, as were jest the same as if she were a-settin' oppersite me, and 'ow I come to dream about ev'ryone mixed up in that dream as I told you about, I can't think."

"Oh !" says he, "I ain't no time for dreamin', and never takes no 'eed on 'em."

I says, "Pre'aps not ; but yet needn't treat 'em as you 'ave, like a unbelievin' Jew, tho' I kep' a-tellin' you, night arter night, when I woke up in a fright, and told you as I were sure as somethink were a-goin' to 'appen, and quite trembled for Queen Wictorier, poor dear !"

"Well," he says, "I don't remember nothink about your dreams, but your snores was frightful, and I know werry well as if I didn't get off to sleep afore you I 'adn't no chance of a good night ; but," he says, "let's 'ear about your dreams, for I ain't a-goin' to read, thro' 'avin' 'ad enuf of that in the train."

"Well," I says, "I'll tell you with pleasure, I'm sure," for I certingly do like to tell Brown things, as sets a-turnin' 'em over in 'is mind's eyes, as the

sayin' is ; and tho' I 'ave known 'im set and listen for ever so long, and then jump up and off to bed, as is a singler man, and tho' he won't own to it, thinks a deal of me, and I must say, tho' I don't set up for no profit, like that there Dr. Cummin', nor yet Nixon, as foretold King George's death, as he were a-goin' out a-'untin', as pre'aps frightened 'is 'orse ; yet when I 'eard as lots of them forrin' potentates, as they calls 'em, were a-comin' over 'ere, I didn't fancy it, for, as I says to myself, tho' they comes peaceful enuf now, who knows as they ain't a-comin' jest to look over the place on the quiet, the same as the man as broke into Mrs. Wybrer's 'ouse, come in the mornin' a-pretendin' to mend the lock, and were a-takin' in them back premises all the time, with 'is heye, and found that werry night in the washus, with a crow-bar under the copper-'ole, by the perlice, as 'ad throwed 'is bull's-eye over the back palins, thro' the cocks and 'ens a-kickin' up sich a row, as 'ad been disturbed thro' the feller a-strikin' of a fusee in the dead of the night. And I fully expects as them Hemperors 'ave some sich job on 'and, and will be back some fine day at the 'ead of their troops.

Says Brown, "Let 'em come. But 'ow about your dream, old gal?"

"Well," I says, "Brown, you did cut me uncommon short that Sunday night, jest afore goin'

to sleep, when I were a-tellin' you as I'd see the Hemperor of Roosher the day afore, and parties said as he wasn't nothink to the Hemperor of Morocker, as were expected daily, and I says to you, 'Brown,' I says, 'I 'as my misgivins, and mark my words if there ain't mischief in it afore it's over; 'as 'owever Queen Wictorier could ask 'em both at the same time, I can't think, as is jest the same as if we wos to ask Mrs. Welbyn and Miss Prudick to meet over a cup of tea, as is 'arf sisters, and goes the 'ole 'og in quarrelin'; for Mrs. Welbyn, as is the youngest, she don't 'esitate to say as Miss Prudick pisoned 'er own father, thro' a-givin' 'im wittles as he couldn't never eat; and as to Miss Prudick, she told me with 'er own lips as she come in jest in time to stop Mrs. Welbyn a-forcin' a-pen and ink into the old man's 'and on 'is death bed, as would 'ave signed away everythink in this world. And if the poor old man 'adn't make 'isself scarce, as the sayin' is, thro' a-dyin', why there's no tellin' where that row would 'ave been carried; but now they don't speak, so there's peace, any'ow for a time; but I wouldn't 'ave 'em meet for the world in my place."

Says Brown to me, "It's my opinion, Martha, as you've been a-goin' light-'eaded ever so long over Queen Wictorier and 'er wisitors, as can please 'erself over 'em."

I says, "Can she, poor dear? I don't believe

as she can, and that's why I feels for 'er, thro' 'avin' 'ad to go thro' it myself when your aunt Caudlin come and stopped with us three months, thro' a-takin' to 'er bed the werry night as she come, not a-meanin' to stay, as the fog come on that thick as ketched 'er breath and pretty nigh choked up 'er 'art, and nothink but 'ot bran ever let 'er draw a free breath agin. So don't talk to me about any one a-choosin' of their wisitors arter that."

"Well," he says, "pre'aps you knows more about it than me, and it don't much matter."

"Well," I says, "pre'aps not, but I can't 'clp a-frettin' over it sometimes."

He says, "Frettin' over wot?"

"Why," I says, "them dreams, as is my torments, as seems like a-pintin' to this Comit like warnin's of the night, as the sayin' is. And if you'd 'ave dreamt as I 'ave, you'd feel it too."

"Why then," says he, "pre'aps I should snore as much as you do, and I wish as you'd drop it, for if you gets off fust I'm blest if there's a chance for me."

I says, "Brown," I says, "I wouldn't go to sleep with a false'ood on my tung if I was you; for 'owever you can say Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, in the same breath, I can't think; as is prayers my dear mother always said 'erself, and taught us all,

poor soul, and I 'opes as you never forgets the last thing." But law bless you, I might as well 'ave been a-talkin' to the bed post, for you was a-sleepin' like a infant at the breast, and not a man to forget your prayers, neither. So when you was off I laid there a-thinkin' over all manner, and a-watchin' the Child's light as I always burns in a sarser on the 'ob ; for I won't 'ave them wax lucifers no more, as the little nob off one on em fell on to the floor last winter, as I trod on and esploded instantaneous under my 'eel, and if I'd 'ad anythink light about me must 'ave been in flames. So I kep' a-watchin' that light when I 'eard a sigh close in my 'ear, and who should be a-settin' at my bedside but the Hemperor of Roosher, jest as I'd see 'im the day afore in the carridge along with 'is dorter and 'er 'usban.

He says to me, "Mrs. Brown, I've jest got away from 'em all, and wants your advice as to makin' of Queen Wictorier a present."

"Law," I says, "a lock of your 'air would be wot she'd like best, thro' not wantin' anythink in value ; and for mussy's sake don't go and give 'er a large cheese, nor yet a chest of drawers, for I've 'eard as there's a lumber room full of sich rubbis' at Kensinton Pallis, as is a place Queen Wictorier can't abear the name on, let alone the sight, thro' 'avin' been brought up there, as they do say wasn't

a 'appy life, as I could tell you a deal about. But law, the parties as told me is all dead and gone, so it's best to let them things alone. But," I says, "in my opinion presents is a reg'lar bore."

He says, "Wot do you think of fine bear 'ams?"

I says, "Keep your bear 'ams to yourself, as ain't things as anyone cares about in Hingland, tho' pre'aps the Scotch might fancy 'em, 'cos they're fond of bear 'ams, and cures 'em even out of a leg of mutton."

He says, "I must give a lot of presents, cos I wants to coax 'em to take down that there monyment about the Crimeer, and give me back all the guns as was took from me."

"Ah!" I says, "you won't get them in a 'urry, cos, tho' that Crimeer war were a reg'lar 'umbug, and only got up jest to keep that there impostor Lewy Napoleon in 'is place; yet I don't think as Queen Wictorier could knock under like that, tho' in course that's all forgot, tho' them as is widders and orfins thro' it won't forget quite so easy; but who would be a sojer I should like to know."

"Ah!" says he to me, "I've got the harmy."

I says, "No doubt; but your sojers ain't like Queen Wictorier's, as makes reg'lar pets on 'em, and if they goes away for jest a month or two for to settle the 'ash of them black beasts, why they're made sich a fuss over when they comes back as

nothink wasn't never like it; and quite right too, for them as stays at 'ome and enjoys theirselves did ought to do all as they can for poor fellers as goes out into them outlandish parts for to lay down their lives for their Queen and country, as the sayin' is, and comes back with penshuns and all sorts of 'oners if only away a few weeks; and that's why Queen Wictorier can always get lots of sojers and sailors too as will go over to Afriker, or anywheres, and fight for years, cos they're sure to get well paid out for it when they comes 'ome, with their widders and orfins provided for; and no lazy fellers a-callin' of theirselves Curnels and Gen'als, a-stoppin' at 'ome and takin' the money for doin' nothink."

I didn't 'ear nothink in reply but a snore, as showed as that Hemperor 'ad been and dropped off, and couldn't anser me over that there harmy question, only the Dook of Cambridge did, as were a-standin' by, and smiled and said —

"Ah! Mrs. Brown, you always was partial to the milingitary."

"Yes," I says, "your royal 'ighness, that I were, and remembers you a boy, that I do, a-walkin' out with your Royal Pa, and see you one Sunday all a-comin' out of the National Gallery, as you did used to get into on a Sunday in them days, afore Old Cummin' come 'is Scotch 'umbug about the Sabbith, as if there was any 'arm in lookin' at

picter on a Sunday, as you can do now at 'Ampton Court."

"Yes," says Dr. Adler; "and it's werry 'ard on me, as am the 'Ebrer perswashun, and knows you ain't a-keepin' the right day arter all."

I says, "You'd better dry up, old feller, cos remember as Jews is only allowed on suffridge, as the sayin' is; so 'old your tung, and be thankful as you can keep your teeth in your 'ead now-a-days."

Says the Pope, a-smilin' at me, "Martha, Martha, don't you be so bigoted."

I says, "Me bigoted; law bless your 'Oliness, I'm as liberal as can be, but I know wot I'd do with them fellers as let them Communists escape. I'd 'ang the lot."

Says Beastmark, "Go it, old gal, you're one of my sort, for I should like to see them Bishops a-danglin' from the 'ighest steeples, a-darin' to go and 'tice my dorter into bein' a Papist."

"Law," I says, "let your dorter do as she likes, jest the same as Queen Wictorier do, and that's the way to make 'ome 'appy."

I says, "And you mind your own busyness, and don't go a-sendin' of your money and sojers agin' them Carlists, it ain't nothink to you who's King of Spain; but you wants to be cock of the walk all over the place, you do, and thinks as now you've bullied France, and got that there Wictor 'Manual

and Italy under your thumb, as you can chaw up the Pope, and do as you likes."

"How you two do keep on a-bickerin'," says Queen Wictorier; and she give me a wink as much as to say drop it, no doubt a-wantin' to get that dirty beast out of the room, as washin' is unbeknown to, and if it wasn't for the pipe, as is never out of 'is mouth, wouldn't be bearable, and went off a-growlin'.

I says, "Thank goodness he's gone."

"Yes," says Queen Wictorier, "a-comin' 'ere a-botherin' about my family; as if I didn't know who was to marry my dorter and who wasn't."

I says, "I do 'ope as it ain't that there nigger Hemperor, cos," I says, "they never turns out well, for I remembers Sarah Plimstid, as took a fancy to the cymbals in the band, as wore big trousers and a turbin, and 'er sister went off with the tamboureen of another rigyment, as certingly were a fine limbed man, with teeth like the driven snow; but neither on 'em wasn't good matches, as it turned out, for both sisters was red 'eaded and short tempers, and couldn't abear music."

Says Queen Wictorier to me, "I ain't a-goin' to be took in by none of these outlandish forriners."

I says, "And glad I am to 'ear it, for wotever is a Rooshin but a savidge."

"Ush!" says a voice in my ear; and there was

the Prince of Wales, as says, "them's my sentiments."

I says, "I'm glad as you've got some swag out of your Duchy property, as I always thought were pretty nigh swallered up by them as managed it for you; tho' I've 'eard say as your Pa did used to look arter it."

He only give me a wink, as spoke volumnes. So in course I let the subji' drop, thro' 'earin' of some singin'; and there set the Hemperor of Moroccer, cross-legged like a tailor, a-throwin' of oranges up in the hair and round 'is turbin, a-singin' as he wished he were the Pope."

I says, "Not in them boots, my pippin; and," I says, "don't you know as Beastmark is about the premises; and if you was the Pope, he'd take and 'arf murder you, for he can't ever 'ear the werry name without a-cursin' and a-swearin' till he's black in the face, and took and trod on Archbishop Mannin's gouty toe the other day, jest out of spite, as I calls mean, and cos he'd got on a pair of the Popes' left-off slippers, as is no doubt easy to the tread, and the Pope give 'im by way of a hindulgence; tho' some say as he bought 'em of the Pope's vally, as, in course, 'as all them for perquits; and a nice easy life on it, with no shoes to clean, nor clothes to brush, and never kep' up late, nor got to dress 'im for dinner, and no boot-jacks

at 'is 'ead, nor bad langwidge to put up with, any more than Queen Wictorier 'erself, as is that pleasant spoken, as even duchesses is proud to wait on 'er, and plenty of time to work for theirselves, tho' not allowed to repeat nothink as they 'ears fall from them Royal lips; as was old Queen Charlotte's ways, as wouldn't let 'em set down even behind 'er back, and never spoke plain English, so as they shouldn't make out wot she were a-sayin' to King George, as I 'ave 'eard say 'ad a bad 'abit of talkin' with 'is mouth full, as were no doubt thro' 'im 'avin' sich a lot in 'is 'ead, as he were afraid of forgettin'."

Says Princess Beetriss to me, "I do 'ope, Mrs. Brown, as you'll speak to Ma, cos I won't be a nun."

"Law," I says, "my dear, whoever wants you to?"

"Why," she says, "it's a party in the name of Noodlegate, as says if I were to be a nun, then they'd let 'im in for to hinspect all the convents."

I says, "Rubbish, my dear; why he might jest as well want to inspect all the boardin' schools; and 'ow about the clubs, as some says there's a good deal of gamblin' goin' on in, and others declares as they are only got up jest to get rid of them licensin' laws, as certingly do press 'eavy on a workin' man."

Well, jest then I 'eard a roar, and if I wasn't on the oshun wave, a-rollin' about, with a storm a-ragin' frightful, like wild bulls a-foamin', and there stood Dizzy at the wheel, without no 'at on, a-singin' out, "Oh ! pilot, 'tis a fearful night."

I says to 'im, "Do 'old your row ; you'll 'ave us on the rocks, my fine feller, if you goes on a-singin', and not a-mindin' of your busyness, cos," I says, "you'll be werry likely to give the wheel a twist the 'rong way, and run agin Ireland."

"Ah ! " he says, "right you are, for that's wot is our chief danger, and tho' I knows that, I ain't a-goin' to let out them Fenians, tho' they might 'elp to work the ship."

"Ah ! " I says, "you're right, partikler 'avin' of Queen Wictorier aboard."

He put 'is finger to 'is nose, and says, "Keep your tater trap shet."

So I says, "That's all thro' bein' so full of the Irish."

"As you says that," says he to me, "do you know wot Queen Wictorier's little game is, in goin' over there ? "

"Well," I says, "I were told as it were Germany as she were a-goin' to, but pre'aps she'll call in there on 'er way 'ome ; but," I says, "I think as she's goin' to Merryker, cos Grant and 'is good lady don't quite square it, and so she's a-goin' to put in

a word, cos she can't abear quarrels 'twixt man and wife."

"Why," says a party, "Grant ain't got no good lady."

"Well then he did ought to 'ave," says I, a-givin' that party a good look, and if it wasn't Gladstin in a sou'-wester, and a tarpaulin down to 'is 'eels.

I says, "Willyam, wot brings you 'ere?"

"Why," he says, "I'm a-lookin' out for squalls, cos that old D'Isreelite won't never be able to get long alone, cos that wheel will take and tear 'is arms out."

"Ah!" I says, "you're a good sort, arter all, to be ready to give a good turn, even to a henemy, if wanted, and I likes you for it, tho' it shows you've got a 'ead as well as a 'art, cos in course you may want 'elp yourself some day, and one good turn deserves another."

"Put 'er about," shouts Gladstin, "for 'ere's Wolly a-tryin' to come aboard," and there sure enuf were Wolly a-shoutin' alongside out of a little boat of 'is own, as nobody wasn't a-noticin'."

"Oh!" throw 'im a rope," says Dizzy.

"Yes," says Gladstin, "only give 'im rope enuf, and he won't trouble you long."

"Oh!" I says, "let 'im come aboard, as I

should like to 'ear 'im sing about the Pope as leads a jolly life."

"Oh! hang it, I can't stand 'is singin'," says Dizzy; but I see as Gladstin were a-fiddlin' about the ropes, a-'angin' on.

So I says, "That's right, my boy, make yourself useful; and in course you're brought up to it like, cos I've 'eard say as your own grandfather were in the seafarin' line;" jest then the wessel give a lurch like, and a young feller give a rush at the wheel.

"'Ands off, Dilke," says Dizzy, "or I'll brain you with a marlin' spike."

I says, "I'll give you my umbreller over your numskull, tho' you are a barrernite, if you dares to interfere; you must be a nice landlubber," I says, "even to look at the wheel, let alone touch it. Why," I says, "aboard a penny steamer you durstu't even speak to the man at the wheel."

"I wish I were aboard a penny steamer," says Dilke, "as runs to Chelsea, for they worships me down there."

I says, "Do they; but," I says, "surely this 'ere is the Tems Embankment."

"Hush," says Dizzy, "we're a-goin' to get Ortin out of Milbank on the quiet, cos he's a-losin' flesh, and won't be worth showin' at the races and fairs,"

"That you're not," says Wolly, "till he's paid all the espences."

"Oh! that he must," says Queen Wictorier, as were a-settin' agin the funnel for shelter, for," says she, "the Hemperor of Roosher were quite shirty, Alfred tells me, when he 'eard wot it 'ad cost to bring that willin' to book, and said as he'd 'ave give 'im the nout pretty sharp if he'd tried it on in Roosher."

"Martha Brown," says a voice in my 'ear, "you don't know me, but I knows you, as my name is Jewry; and would you mind a-puttin' in a good word for me to Queen Wictorier, as 'ave 'eard as you're like two twins."

I says, "Certingly we are, with four year between us; but," I says, "wot is it?"

"Why," she says, "I'm prepared to swear as the Lord Mare ain't the Lord Mare at all, but 'is eldest brother, as weren't never 'eard on no more till he come back from over there, when he run away to sea, as is wot Mr. Wolly, and Luie, and Onsler, and Bogey, and 'is son, and Miss Brains, and a lot more will swear to, cos we settled it all among ourselves, so did ought to be believed; and as to the other jury a-sayin' as they didn't get enuf money, I'm sure I never complained of that."

I said, "I thought as old Bogey died thro' the shock of 'carin' as 'is dear master 'ad been sent to

quod, with only time to give up 'is watch and chain."

"No you don't," says a sojer, a-collarin' of a nigger boy, and snatchin' a watch from 'im, "give it up, as 'is loot."

I says, "Wotever do you mean by loot, as is a instrument as is always give with anyone's 'art, as the song says."

"Oh!" he says, "we're jest come 'ome, and we're a-goin' to loot London, and set fire to the Pallis, jest the same as you did over in Chiney."

I says, "Who are you, then?"

"Why," he says, "we're the Rooshins and the Prooshins as won the battle of Waterloo, when you English was dead beat."

I says, "Wot rubbish; why the French was dust before the wind, as the sayin' is, afore ever you was near, for I've see the place, so none of your braggin' "

Says Queen Wictorier, "'Owever you can illude to Waterloo when we're at Chiselhurst, a-goin' to call on the widdler and orfin."

I says, "I don't want to call on 'er, poor woman, now she's down, as weren't never a party as I cared about when up, nor none of the lot, thro' a-seein' the Battle of Waterloo at Ashleys when quite a gal, as always set me agin' Bonyparty, as set a werry bad esample to 'is sojers, in my opinion,

in takin' sich lots of snuff, as must be werry orkard for anyone in firin' of a gun for to sneeze suddin', as might blow their noses off, and lose a battle thro' it, thro' not a-keepin' of their powder dry, nor yet their eyes right, as nobody can't in sneezin'."

"Right you are," says Cardnil Wolsey, as were all smiles, and said as he'd jest come 'ome from a shanty, been two 'ours with the Queen, as asked 'im all manner; and no doubt he were in a nice stew in tellin' 'er, a-knowin' as she knowed all about it.

She says, "I wish you'd 'ave been there, Mrs. Brown, you'd 'ave give a lame dog a lift over a stile."

Says Dizzy to me, "Now, Martha, you always was fond of a red coat; but don't stop a-maggin' out there, but come in and 'ave a quiet jaw with me, or else 'owever can I get on with my budget?"

"Well," I says, "shall it be tea or sperrits and water, give it a name."

He says, "Well, then, tea, tho' you won't object to a little somethink in it, in case as that sea water should 'ave struck to me."

I says, "Certingly not, as I considers a dooty in anyone to take with your mind on the rack."

"Well," he says, "that's true, that is; but 'ow to manage this ere surplis is wot puzzles me most,"

"Well," I says, "wot is it?"

"Why," he says, "millyons,"

"Then I say put some on it away somewheres agin a rainy day."

Says a party jest close to 'im, "Give us some."

"Why?" says I.

"Because I'm Gilbert Onslar, and wants a lot for to pay the judges and juries for lettin' off that there Claimint so easy. Besides," he says, "I wants a new trial."

"Oh!" I says, "don't you wish you may get it. A likely chance as the judges is a-goin' to 'ave all that trouble over agin, jest cos you've got money on it. No, my boy," I says, "you must wait till he's out of quod, and then get your money back by a-showin' 'im over the country, along with the two fat ladies, as in course it's only right as you should 'ave wot you deserves, arter bein' took in like wot you was, as is no doubt one of them soft-'arted parties as can't believe as anyone would tell a lie." I says, "As to that jury as wanted to be paid more money, I dou't think as they'll get it myself, as did ought to feel satisfied in 'avin 'stuck up for a innercent man, as she says he is, and certingly 'ave done enuf to blacken 'er own brother; not but wot he'd been and done that pretty well isself."

"Oh! bother that Claimint," says Disreely; "do drop 'im, and never dare mention 'is name agin or you'll drive me to drinkin'."

I says, "Drink in welcome; but not out of the bottle," as I see 'im a-liftin' to 'is mouth.

"That's pretty manners for a fust lord," says Queen Wictorier, as 'ad jest dropped in, and wouldn't take 'er bonnet off, cos she said as she couldn't stop, but only come for a mouthful of fresh air arter that drorin'-room as she'd been a-'oldin'

I says, "Wot a reglar bore you must find 'em; cos it ain't as if they was only Lords and Ladies as come, but sich a lot of rubbish gets in as is only soap-bilers' wives and sich nobodies as wants to show their fine clothes, like."

"Oh!" she says, "give me a cup of tea, and don't let's talk about it, for I wants to 'ear wot this old Dizzy's got to say."

"Well," he says, "I've got sich a cold," as 'ad 'is face tied up in one of Brown's ankerchers, as I knowed in a minit, cos they ain't used much now, and did used to be called Belchers.

I says, "Wherever did you get that ankercher from?"

"Oh!" he says, "I found it in a drawer and it's one as Gladstin left behind."

I says, "Ah! poor feller, I'm sorry as he've been drove for a night's lodgin' to the Nooput Market refuge, as is 'ard lines arter livin' close agin tho Dook of York's collim, as were put up there for a warnin' to other royal families to pay their debts

afore they dies, so as not to 'ave their mem'ries insulted arter death, like that. Jest like George the Fourth, without nothink on 'im but a sheet round 'is shoulders a-doin' the bare-backed steed in Trafalgar Square, as they might put this 'ere King Coffee's umbreller over 'is 'ead, as would show it better than old King Cole's Exhibishun at South Kensington.

"But why," I says to Dizzy, "take away that poor denuded black beast's umbreller from 'im?"

"Ah, that's wot I says," cries Queen Wictorier, "and should 'ave told Wolsey so, only didn't like to be down on 'im the fust momint as he landed, partikler as he meant well in sendin' it to me. But, bless the man, I ain't 'arf room for things of value as I've got, and don't want that old gingham a-'arberin' dust."

"Yes," I says, "and that poor wretch as is proud of 'is complexion, will be all black freckles over 'is face, as is as big as wafers, no doubt, as'll make 'im a nice objic by the time as he gets here."

"Oh! I do 'ope as he wont wolunteer a wisit," says Queen Wictorier, with a shudder, "for we ain't got over that Shah yet, as is why I don't care to stop in Buckin'am Pallis."

"Ah!" says Dizzy, "if I'd been in, you shouldn't 'ave been bothered with none of that 'eathen lot, nor yet Grabidaldi, as ain't no better than Odger."

"Ah!" I says, "we all makes mistakes; but,"

I says, "now as Queen Wictorier 'ave lewanted, let's talk pollytics."

"Well," says Dizzy, "'ow about Ireland?"

I says, "Why not leave Ireland to the Irish, as is wot my good gentleman always says, cos, as he says, no one can say as Inghland 'ave treated it proper; and I only wish as he'd 'ave come in while Queen Wictorier were 'ere, cos he'd 'ave told 'er a bit of 'is mind, for tho' he's one as loves 'is Queen and country, and won't never be be'ind with 'is taxes, not even the water, yet always says as it ain't fair the way as Ireland is treated, and, in course, if Queen Wictorier don't like the Irish like she does the Scotch, then why not let 'em 'ave 'Ome Rule, and manage their own affairs. Cos I'm sure they've been werry perlite when the Royal family 'ave gone there; tho' they 'aven't much reason to love the Protestant succession, Brown always says. But," I says, "if you're a-goin' to sleep, Mr. Disreely, over it, there ain't no use in askin' me my opinion."

"I ain't asleep," he says, "not a bit on it. No! No! I'm wide awake enuf over Ireland."

"Well," I says, "then don't go a-interferin' too much; cos I'm one as can't abear no interference, and that's why I can't abear Mrs. Garstone, as come into my place when my back was turned, and stopped the gal a-doin' wot I told 'er about bakin' of a loaf in a slow oven, and persuaded 'er to put

more fire under, and when I come in it were dried up to a chip, and as black as a coal. But," I says, "you're a-noddin' agin, so do wake up and tell me wotever you're a-goin' to do with all this 'ere young Rooshun duchess's money?"

"Oh!" says he, "the old bloke's a deal too wide awake to let us 'ave the fingerin' on it, and won't let it go to pay none of Alfred's debts."

I says, "He don't want it; cos as to debts, he ain't got none, cos he've always been that careful, with no wild rantypole ways, as is thro' 'avin' that esample in 'is Royal ma; but," I says, "I think that Hemperor might 'ave give the young couple a trifle for to furnish with, cos tho', in course, they likes a-stayin' along with Queen Wictorier, yet would 'ave took a pride in a little place of their own; and I do 'ope as she wont go a-leavin' of them jewils behind at Buckin'am Pallis."

"Bless your 'art," says Dizzy, "they're all kep' in a box] under Queen Wictorier's own bed for safety, cos nobody ain't never allowed to go into that room with a light, but 'erself."

"Why," I says, "she surely don't make the bed with 'er own Royal 'ands, nor yet do the room, as must be swep' once a week at the werry least, with the flue took up under the bed with a damp flannin. Ah! but," I says, "in course them duchesses does that, as wouldn't be likely to go

a-tamperin' with no locks, nor yet give the hoffice to no follerers ; besides two perlicemen bein' outside the door day and night, and John Brown, as sleeps on the mat at the bottom of the stairs, as is werry 'andy in case of fire ; cos, in course, he don't never take 'is things off, thro' bein' only 'arf dressed all day."

Says Dizzy, "I can't abear this 'ere Scotch dressin', for I'm perished without my——"

I says, "For mussy sake don't go out in that there kilt ;" for there he was, poor soul, a-shiverin', with 'is nose as blue as 'is knees a-knockin' together with the cold ; "but," I says, "I didn't know as we was in Scotland."

"Yes," says Dizzy, "and I'm minister-in-wait-in' on 'er Majesty."

"But," I says, "surely you ain't a-goin' to preach to 'er, and any'ow, obligated to be in wait-in' out 'ere in the cold without your nat'ral coverin'."

"Oh!" he says, "it's all Gladstin's spite, as put Queen Wictorier up to comin' 'ere, as keeps 'isself warm with 'avin' a fling along with the servints, as you can 'ear 'em a-dancin' in there."

So I looks thro' a door, and there I see Queen Wictorier a-settin' a-watchin' them Scotch a-dancin', and a-smilin' that afferble.

So, I says to 'er, "Don't you think as a Irish jig would make a change?"

"Yes," says she, "and I'm a-goin' to 'ave one at Buckin'am Pallis soon; for," she says, "don't you fancy as I forgets my Hirish subjics."

"Oh!" I says, "you must 'ave sich a lot of subjics in your 'ead, and can't remember 'em all."

"Ah!" she says, "that's why I want you near me constant, cos really them ministers is sich a lot of old womin; I can't get nothink, and 'ere's a nice mess as they've got me into with famin in Injier, as is more plague than profit, as I should like to let it out to the Hemperor of Roosher, as wants more room for 'untin' in, and would come down 'andsome for it."

"Well," I says, "it's a mussy as the famin's over. I dare say them niggers would jest as soon 'ave Rooshins as English to rule over 'em, and so long as they pay the rent reg'lar wot should we care; cos we've 'ad a pretty good innins, and 'ave took all the cream off pretty well, since that time as we punched Tipper Saib's 'ead, tho' Brown he always will 'ave it as we 'adn't no right there. But as I always says to 'im, if you come to right, why there ain't sich a thing in the 'ole world, nor never was, nor never will be, cos in course them as is strong enuf will always take and plunder them as ain't, and punch their 'eads into the bargin."

Says Gladstin, "I'm sure I tried to do right, and look 'ow I've been treated."

Dizzy bust out a-larfin' that loud as made Queen Wictorier turn 'er 'ead, and she says, "Now then, you boys, no skylarkin' 'ere."

I says, "They wasn't up to no larks, please your Majesty, only Willyam Ewit were a-comin' of it a leetle too strong, I must say."

Says Dr. Pusey, "Am I a-goin' to be listened to or not? Cos I've got a plan for to settle all the differencs as I deplores."

"'Ear, 'ear," says Dizzy.

"Well, wot is it?" I says.

"Why, 'e've been and rote it all to the papers," says Queen Wictorier, "and all as he's got for 'is pains were to be asked 'owever he could rite sich stuff."

"I'm sure we don't want to 'ear 'im, poor old man," says Dizzy; "cos tho' a-meanin' well, he's that confused in 'is 'ead, and don't think as it were right a-doin' away with purchase in the Church, as is the same as the Harmacy."

Says Queen Wictorier, a-callin' from 'er room, "Mrs. Brown, do send them parties away, and not let 'em keep on a-maggin' at my door, for I wants to 'ear Dr. MucMullitall preach, as won't be more than two 'ours and a 'arf over it, and you can come in if you likes."

I says to myself, "Not as I knows on;" and see both Dizzy and Gladstin a-sneakin' downstairs on

tip-toe. So I jest took 'old of Dr. Pusey by the harm, and showed 'im out by the back door, as kep' on a-sayin' as he were an old man, and deeply pained all the way.

I says to Dizzy, as I come upon suddin, with 'is ear to a key-'ole, "I calls that mean a-listenin' "

"Oh!" he says, "I'm only a-waitin' to 'ear if that sermin is over."

I says, "Bless your 'art, long ago; cos no doubt Queen Wictorier is in a 'urry to get off and go to review them black creeturs on the coast of Africkur as is called the Black Watch, and a good sharp watch they must 'ave kep', but," I says, "is it true as you're a-goin' to take off all these taxes and go round with the 'at instead? Then," I says, "you must 'ave a deal of cheek. But," I says, "there's Queen Wictorier a-callin' me, as I 'eard 'er woice as plain as our kitchen clock a-strikin' when it did used to stand on the stairs, and her words was, 'Why, Martha, wot a lazy old toad you're a-gettin', to be sure,' and looks up, and if it wasn't not Queen Wictorier but Mrs. Padwick. So," I says, "well, if mine is dreams in course they is; but I believes there's somethink more in 'em as'll put 'em down so as to remember 'em, as will prove some day wot was a-goin' on in my 'ead about Disreely, as may prove useful to 'im to know, cos knowledge is power, as the sayin' is, and he'll want to keep that

as long as he can, thro' 'avin' been kep' out of it so long."

Says Mrs. Padwick, "Are you a-goin' to get up?"

"Well," I says, "my limbs aches all over, as is the east wind, so I do think as I'll 'ave jest 'arf a 'our, and I do 'ope no more of them dreams as will shorten my life."

"Well," she says, "we've 'ad the sweeps in the front kitchen, so it will be a good 'arf 'our afore the place is ready, let alone breakfast, and you may as well 'ave a little more bed."

And when I did get up I were not myself thro' them dreams not all day, and they certingly do set 'eavy on me at night.

"Ah!" says Brown, "but 'ow about a bit of 'ot supper and setersers afore goin' to bed?"

"Law," I says, "Brown, I've took it all my life, even since fifteen, so it ain't 'urt me much; but," I says, "to speak serous, do you think as this comet might loosen the hearth, and 'ave a landslip, or somethink, cos I wouldn't go to Margit, for the cliffs 'ave fell into the sea a good bit upon the fort, and preaps a strong convulsion might send it all into the oshun, the same as the Goodwin Sands, as 'ave been foretold is to touch the top of Teddin'ton steeple, as will be a good long stretch for it any'ow, won't it?"

“Oh!” says Brown, “that were all moonshine, somethink like your dreams; but,” he says, “you may dream as much as you likes to-night, for I’m that tired as nothink won’t keep me awake.”

“No,” I says, “for you’ve been a-noddin’ over all as I’ve been a-sayin’ to you, so bed’s the best place for you,” and off he went accordin’

It were two or three days arter a-takin’ tea along with Mrs. Padwick, as I made the remark, a-talkin’ over the comet, as pre’aps it ’ad give the Hemperor Morocker a turn, and ’ad made ’im stop at ’ome, jest like parties as shets theirselves up in the coal cellar when frightened at thunder.”

Says Miss Pilkinton, “I never ’eard he were a-comin’ ”

I says, “He certingly were, for it were in all the papers.”

She says, “I never see it, did you, Mrs. Padwick?”

She said as she did not remember, so I said as I knowed it were said as he were a-comin’, cos Brown at that time did used to read the papers to me reg’lar, and it was all thro’ that as I come to know everythink as were on the trapeze, as the sayin’ is; and the Hemperor of Morocker were one, and then they did talk of the King of the Sandwich Islands, as come over ’ere afore, when I were a gal

and lived in Lester Square, and some say died thro' over-eatin' theirselves on raw beef-steaks, thro' bein' reg'lar hanibals in their happetites, and well remembers Brown a-readin' on it, cos I can see 'im now a-settin' oppersite me at the fire, and me a-thinkin' 'ow much 'appier I were than any queen, in 'avin' such a 'usban', tho' uffy at times, as in course I didn't want no argyments with Miss Pilkinton; so let it drop about the Hemperor of Morocker, and kep' on at the comet, as we went out at the back door to look at, and I 'ad a large magnifyin' glass, as I kep' a-lookin' thro' at, as Miss Pilkinton said I couldn't see it thro', but I says, "I do see it wonderful."

"Law," she says, "that's no use, as you couldn't get the comet in focus by."

I says, "I don't know anythink about fogus nor hocus, but I can see a glare."

"Yes," says she, laughin', "that's the gas lamp of the stable next door, as is jest over your 'ead."

And so it were, so I didn't say no more, thro' a-'earin' as the comet were a-comin' nearer, and shall see it well from Margit, tho' I can't swaller that tail of 'is a-bein' four million miles long; but then in course I can't say it ain't, cos I don't know; so we watched it ever so long, and then I went 'ome to supper, and I 'oped we should be a-sleepin' by the

oshun wave the next night, as would be the best place if the comet did come.

“Oh!” Brown says, “blow the comet,” and goes off to ’is club quite short.

So Miss Pilkinton she set a-chattin’, and in come Mrs. Padwick, a-sayin’ as she got a lodger as wanted to go up to the top of St. Paul’s by midnight, so as to see the comet more clear.

“Well,” I says, “I wish ’er joy.”

“Oh!” says Miss Pilkinton, “I should so like to go.”

Says Mrs. Padwick, “Well then, go; for I’m sure Martha won’t go.”

I says, “Not me; for all the comets in the world a-spreadin’ of their tails at once, for I’d see St. Paul’s burnt fust, for I’ve ’ad enuf of St. Paul’s.”

“Law!” says Mrs. Clifdin, as ’ad come in for a chat, “I ’adn’t no consumption you was sich a radical, Mrs. Brown, agin the Church.”

I says, “I ain’t no radical, but considers as I were not well treated over St. Paul’s.”

She says, “Law! as ’ow?”

“Why,” I says, “I’ll tell you when them two is off.”

So Mrs. Padwick and Miss Pilkinton ’ooked it, as the sayin’ is, and then I set and talked to Mrs. Clifdin, as is a lone widder, and comes in sometimes when I’m alone for a little company.

“So,” she says, “do tell me about St. Paul’s be’avin’ bad to you, for I’d rather ’ear about a place from you than see it for myself; tho’ they do say as seein’ is believin’ ”

“Well,” I says, “it’s four or five years ago as I went, thro’ not bein’ no sight-seer in the gen’ral way, thro’ bein’ fond of my ’ome, but would do anythink to oblige a friend;” not as I considers goin’ to church no pleasure, as is too solemn for a day’s outin’, and I’m sure I shouldn’t never ’ave thought of goin’ to St. Paul’s myself, tho’, in course, I ’olds with goin’ to a place of wusship in a general way, as the sayin’ is, as looks respectable, partikler in a family the same as Mr. Flanders’, the big undertaker’s near our corner, as turned out reg’lar with nine altogether, as fills two pews of a Sunday mornin’, and were ’ighly respected in the parish church till the minister’s daughter died, and were berried by a patent funeral company, with a open car and white plumes, as was a thing as Mr. Flanders never would look over, so joined the Lady Huntindon’s connexion the very next week—a body as is a-decayin’ rapid, and ’ave brought ’im plenty of business already.

They do say as the eldest son jest married ’ave stuck to the Established Church, where they berries still in semmetries tho’ the churchyard ’ave been

shet, and that's 'ow it were as I come to go up St. Paul's thro' Mrs. Crockett, as is Brown's aunt by the mother's side thro' marriage, as is a reg'lar Churchwoman, and wouldn't miss it three times a day on Sunday, and reglar Wednesday and Friday was it ever so, thro' bein' 'ead westry-woman at St. Bartlet and St. Swiffin's united, as did use to pick up nice crumbs thro' churchins, and marryins, and christenins, till the Ritchalists come along as swept it all away when the old wicar died, as 'ad been there over fifty year, and never lived a month in the parish all the time.

To 'ear Mrs. Crockett go on about them new parties as was Ritchalists, and a deal wuss than the Pope 'isself, and took and kep' all the fees themselves, and actually laid out the Communion theirselves, as she'd always done once a month that respectable in a black silk gownd, as looked the lady all over, and 'ad never been so put down by mere curates, and 'ad 'ad bishops call her mum to 'er face, and then to come to daily prayers and all manner, as she says, as must be the ruin of the Church in time.

So I says, "Well, mum, parties thinks different on them pints."

"Yes," she says, "but no one as is a Christshun minister would think of stoppin' the reg'lar fees, and go for to shut the clerk's mouth, as 'ad been

there over forty years, and tell 'im he was a nuisance."

I see it wasn't no use a-talkin' to the old lady, as is warm, tho' not so werry old neither, bein' only sixty-two, and as nimble as a bee.

'Er and me 'ad always been good friends, so when she asked me to go to St. Paul's I did not say 'er nay, tho' not a-carin' about it, tho' used to church when a child, for my dear mother know'd the 'ead pew-opener at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, as they did used to call it afore Cherrin' Cross were built.

I can jest remember that churchyard close agin the King's Mews, as were a throroughfare thro' the same as Stepney, and all the bodies took up in cart-loads to Camden Town for to make way for the Strand, as was a dreadful shock, leastways so she said, to Mrs. Crockett, thro' Crockett not bein' let rest in 'is grave, as she couldn't abear 'is bein' disturbed out on, as is only nat'ral, for when berried you expects as they are settled for life, as the sayin' is, and the espence, as were no joke, all throwed away, as were a noble funeral as she gave 'im, with a board of feathers in front, thro' 'im bein' in the general line in Chandos Street.

As to Mrs. Arkiss, as is own sister to Mrs. Crockett, tho' different mothers, she was never the same woman agin arter she 'eard as 'er two inno-

cency infants was not to be let rest in their graves, and the westry quite short with 'er when applyin' for redress, a-sayin' as they'd been berried over forty years, and only ten days old, they couldn't consider the case, as if that made any difference to a mother's feelins.

I says to Mrs. Crockett, I says, "Escuse me a-askin', but," I says, "a-goin' to St. Paul's you ain't a-goin' to make me a witniss to nothink, nor even a godmother, the same as Mrs. Welch, as were a-standin' by St. Pancrust's old church, and were asked by the beadle if she'd mind a-šteppin' in for to stand godmother, by the proxy, to a infant as 'ad been disappointed of one, and were deserted by the parties jest arter at the nearest public-'ouse, where they asked Mrs. Welch for to come and take a little refreshment, as no doubt ocussed the hale, for she didn't remember nothink arter takin' it warm, till she was woke up by the potboy, as told 'er that the babby were a-shriekin' for 'er, as them waggerbones 'ad been and lewanted, and left it a-layin' on the seat beside 'er, as she took to the workus, but always went to see it till it died, as was at the end of a fortnight, as 'll come 'ome to that mother some day, wherever she may be."

Mrs. Crockett says, a-jokin' like, "No, not a godmother, but when I marries agin, you shall be bridesmaid."

I says, "That I will," and larfs, little a-thinkin' as there's many a true word spoke in jest, as the sayin' is; and I'm sure, if I'd 'ad the least consumption as that old fool were a-goin' to marry a mere boy, as ill-used her shameful, till he bolted with everythink as he could lay 'is 'ands on, she'd never 'ave 'ticed me up St. Paul's with 'er.

We was four in all, as met jest agin the Post Office, thro' Mrs. Crockett a-comin' by the 'bus from Islington, along with 'er own sister, Mrs. Arkiss, and that young man in the name of Namby, as Mrs. Crockett said she'd nussed a babby, as well she might, and no gal even then, and to think of 'er a-marryin' 'im.

I couldn't abear the feller not the fust moment as I set eyes on 'im, as were a white-livered lookin' waggerbone, with a reg'lar deceitful way with 'im.

We didn't 'urry thro' St. Paul's Churchyard, as 'ave wonderful shop winders to look at, with werry cheap things to judge by the price.

It was a bitter cold day, with the wind enough to cut you in two, as the sayin' is; but when we got into the church it struck that warm as were surprisin', considerin' as it were a reg'lar Marble 'All, as the sayin' is.

There was a good many parties a-'angin' about, and we come on to a reg'lar crowd as was a-chattin' and a-larfin', when all of a sudden the orgin bust out

a-playin', and if there wasn't a lot of parties up a sort of a court at prayers as they was a-singin'

So I says to Mrs. Crockett, "Is these ere parties a-prayin'?"

She says, "Oh dear, no;" and begins a-talkin' to a friend of ern, as wore a black gound with knots over it, and 'ad a silver poker in 'is 'and, as she said were the 'ead werger, and she says the service is only a form as they keeps up twice a-day, and as parties as comes reg'lar to is allowed a trifle a week for to make up a congregation.

I says, "Oh indeed," not a-knowin' nothink of their ways.

We 'ad to stop till they was done a-singin' afore we could be allowed over the place, as is a down-right wilderness for size, and as to dust, I never see such 'eaps in my life afore.

The monymnts is werry grand like all over the place, with soldiers, wictories, and angels in their dyin' agonies.

Law bless me, it's a dismal-lookin' place, as ain't no use for a place of wuship, as no one at one end can't 'ear one 'arf of what's goin' on at the other, tho' I 'ave 'eard say as there's a party in the name of Sturging, or some such a name, as can beller louder than any bull, and make 'isself 'eard all over the water there.

When we'd been a-lookin' round some time,

I says, "I suppose as we might as well be a-goin'."

"Oh," says Mrs. Crockett, "we ain't seen nothink yet; there's the golden gallery as I wants to see."

I says, "That must be awful grand."

So upstairs we goes to see it, and never did I feel stairs as tried me more, and made my legs trimble under me agin.

Well, at last we was mounted up ever so 'igh, and went thro' a door into a gallery, and if we wasn't in the church agin, ever so 'igh up, as give me that turn, as I couldn't look over without my 'ead a-swimmin' agin.

I set down, a-leanin' agin the wall, and says to Mrs. Crockett, as was next me, "Whatever is the use of them old fellers a-potterin' about everywhere with you, as is only so many blood-suckers, and nothink to show arter all."

"Oh," says Mrs. Crockett, "they're to protect the place."

"Well," I says, "there ain't no fear of any one a-runnin' away with it."

"No," says Mrs. Crockett, "but must be looked arter, thro' bein' a uational monyment, with Lord Nelson and the Dook of Wellington both berried in it."

I says, "That old fool as 'ave come with us 'ave

been a-sayin' a deal of foolishness, as I don't believe a word on."

Jest then a voice at my elber says, "Who are you a-callin' a old fool? You'd better look at 'ome."

I turns round with a jump, and there wasn't nobody near.

So I says, "Mrs. Crockett, this may be a place of wuship, but in my opinion, there's evil sperrits about, and I'd rather go."

I see 'er a-larfin', and I says, "I don't consider it no larfin' matter, and wouldn't laugh in church myself, were it ever so."

She says "Wait a bit," and then speaks low like, and says, "I'll complain of you."

The voice come out of the wall agin, and says, "I'll come and throw you both over."

Up I jumps, and out of the place I rushes, Mrs. Crockett a-follerin' me.

I meets a man, and says, "Which way?"

He says, "Straight on," and I goes thro' a sort of a gallery, and Mrs. Crockett she calls arter mc, "This way," and law, I was that confused as I didn't 'ardly know where I was, and if we didn't get outside somehow, and there was all London underneath us, like, and if it 'adn't been for the smoke I do believe as I could 'ave see our street.

Mrs. Arkiss she got out jest afore mc, and was a-walkin' round and turned a corner like sharp

when the wind ketched 'er dress and blowed it nearly over 'er 'ead.

I never was so ashamed of any one in my life, for the back of the chimbly was whiteness to 'er flannin petticoat, as couldn't never 'ave seen soap and water in this world, and sich boots and stockin's, with legs like mill posts.

So I runs up to 'er to set 'er to rights, and says, "For goodness' sake let me pin your gownd down, or somethink, for to 'ide your flannin."

She says, "Mind your own business, and leave my flannin alone, and, for that matter, look at 'ome, as 'ave got a 'ole in your own stockin as big as a potato."

I says, "Then it's the seam up the back of my leg as 'ave give way; but," I says, "my things is clean, any'ow, thank goodness."

"Well," she says, "you ain't much to be thankful for that way, as 'ave got a face like a sweep," and so I 'ad, thro' 'avin' put my 'ands on them dusty places inside, and wiped my face with my 'ands, without givin' it a thought.

In course I didn't want to 'ave no words with that party, so pretends to be a-lookin' that 'ard at the view as not to 'ear all as she said, and must say as I never could 'ave believed as there was so many chimbly pots wisible to the naked eye.

Mrs. Crockett and that young feller 'ad walked

theirselves off, so I 'ad to look out for myself, and shouldn't 'ave minded anything but for the wind, as blowed that wiolent one side as I were obligated to turn back.

Well, just as I were a-walkin' back round that gallery, I met the wind agin full butt, as the sayin' is, as nearly swep my bonnet clean off my 'ead, and I thought would 'ave throwed me down, and so it would, only for Mrs. Crockett and that young man a-ketchin' 'old of me, as I see a-goin' on foolish just afore.

When I'd got my breath, I says, "Let's get out of this place."

"Yes," says Mrs. Crockett, "we'll go and see the Goldin Gallery," and away she goes, a-'oppin' up-stairs like a cock-sparrer for lightness, tho' she were only a-showin' off before that young man, a old scrag o' mutton of a thing.

I don't think as ever I knowed wot stairs was till I was a-goin' up St. Paul's, as they did ought to 'ave a windlash, leastways a crane to work anyone up by, and, I'm sure, when I got to that Goldin Gallery, I 'adn't a bit of breath left in my body, and of all the takes in as ever I see, it was a-callin' it goldin, as is only iron railins gilded over.

But, law, I 'adn't no time to make no remarks, for the wind ketched me that wiolent and suddin, like ten thousand 'urricanes, as carried away my

collar, and hopened out my umbreller, suddin like, as was twisted inside out in a jiffey; and if I adn't let go on it, would 'ave carried me off my legs, like a balloon, goodness knows where, the same as my umbreller went to.

"Oh, you've been the death of a many," says Mrs. Crockett.

"I wouldn't be in your shoes for a trifle," says Mrs. Arkiss; "you must be a downright wicked woman!"

"Wot for?" says I. "'Ow can I 'elp the wind?"

"Oh!" she says, "don't talk to me about the wind," she says; "I never see sich a hact, you a-goin' to shy your umbreller over like that, as may cause the death of 'underds, a-fallin' that 'ighth."

I says, "I didn't go to do it."

"Oh!" says a man, "if it should come to the Chapter's hears, it will be serous."

I says, "Wherever is their hears?"

"Oh!" he says, "they've give strict horder, as is a 'eavy fine for anyone as throws things, even orange peel, as 'll come down like cannon balls, sich a way up, and as to a umbreller, they'll think as the dome's been carried away."

I says, "Then I'll 'urry down then."

"No," says Mrs. Crockett, "take it cool, and

then you won't be suspected, and let's come and see the clock."

So I goes, tho' it were werry much agin the grain, as the sayin' is.

I must say as that clock is werry wonderful, as ticks like thunder; but jest as we was a-lookin', if it didn't take and strike the 'our, and give me that shock, as down I went like a shot.

Says Mrs. Arkiss, "Wotever ails you?"

I says, "It was the shock."

"Law," she says, "do stand up; they'll think as you've been a-drinkin' "

I says, "I only wish I 'ad been, for I'm down-right famishin' for a draught of somethink."

She says, a-sneerin', "You can't expect to find no drink in a church."

I didn't say nothink; and were a-listenin' to the man, as were a-tellin' 'ow a party were choked by the 'and of the clock outside, thro' a-puttin' of 'is 'ead out thro' the clock face to look at the Lord Mayor's Show, a-comin' up Ludgate 'Ill.

Arter that, we got down stairs, and 'ad to go and see the waults, as I did not care about, tho' werry interestin', I must say, thro' bein' the old ancient church, as was burnt by the fire of London, as, in course, couldn't burn under ground; as was built by the Romans, as 'ave left some of their graven himages be'ind.

Certingly the Duke of Wellington 'ave got a noble tomb, as well he deserved, no doubt, along with Lord Nelson, as fought 'and to 'and, and was shot in the moment of wictory, as was the name of 'is ship ; and I've 'eard my dear mother say were brought by water to Greenwich, and berried solemn, rowed by sailors.

I must say as it's well worth a-seein', is that St. Paul's, tho' oversized I should say, and glad I was to get out of it, and we got a bus, as took us up to Islington, as is where Mrs. Crockett 'ave lived ever since she give up the westry, as did used to be a grand church, where parties was obligated to come to by act of Parlyment, or else couldn't 'ave no place under government.

But things is werry much changed, Mrs. Crockett says ; and as the fees was a-fallin' off, she took a pension, and lives retired in two rooms, as did once used to look over the cattle layers, as come in by droves of a Sunday night, afore the new market were built.

I was a good deal put out by Mrs. Arkiss, as come in to tea, and wanted to make out as them woices as I 'eard up in St. Paul's, was the Whisper-in' Gallery.

I says, " Go along with your rubbish ; whisper-in' indeed ! it was spoke with a woice that laudible as you might 'ave 'eard it all over the place."

Then Mrs. Arkiss said, "Why was St. Paul's like a bird's nest?"

I says, "I never did guess a riddle in my life; but," I says, "there plenty of bird's nests about it."

"Oh!" she says, "you don't see the joke. Why," she says, "wasn't it built by a Wren?"

I says, "Mum, you'll excuse me, but I do not consider as a church is a place for redicule, nor jokin' about, so if you please we'll drop it."

"Like as you did your umbereller," says she.

I says, "That's my busyness."

She says, "Why didn't you ask for it?"

I says, "Not so green," little a-thinkin' wot that artful old 'ussey were up to, for if she didn't go the werry next day and get my umbereller back, thro' a-kickin' up a row with the wergers as shows the church, as I shouldn't never 'ave knowed, only 'er and Mrs. Crockett 'ad a tiff, and then Mrs. Crockett told me, jest to spite Mrs. Arkiss.

Tho' for that matter, I met 'er with it full butt, as the sayin' is, on Pentonwill 'Ill, in a 'eavy shower, as got out of my way thro' a-makin' a dive into a wine waults, with two doors, as she went in at one and out at the other, and 'urried up a side street, and ketched a perliceman in the pit of 'is stomick with the umbereller, thro' a-'oldin' it in front of 'er face, as took and stopped 'er short.

So I goes up to 'ear wot she 'ad to say, tho' a-

scornin' to notice a 'air of 'er 'ead, and 'earin' of 'er say as it were the umbereller's fault, as were a beastly old cumbersome thing, as big as a bed-post.

I says to the perliceman, "They do say as a gift 'orse didn't ought to be looked in the face, and I'm sure a stolen umbereller didn't ought to."

Says the perliceman, "Is it your'n?"

"Yes," I says.

"Will you give 'er in charge for stealin it?" says he.

I says, "I might if I wasn't too much the lady."

"A nice lady," says Mrs. Arkiss, "as was the wuss for liquor on the top of St. Paul's, and shied 'er umbreller over into the street, as would 'ave proved fatal, only it 'appened to ketch on the balisters, as the man give it to me, tho' ashamed to be seen with 'er thro' bein' in the 'abit of goin' to the church, and I was a-goin' to return it only didn't know this person's address."

I do think as I should 'ave struck that woman but for the perlice, as said, "'Ere, I don't want no rows; give 'er the umbereller and 'ook it," and so she did in a minit.

But, bless you, I couldn't get the umbereller up when down, nor down when up, as 'ad the ribs a-startin' thro' the alpaca in three places, and thro'

'avin a new one I didn't want it, and as I knowed it wasn't worth nothink, I sold it for eightpence to a party as come by with 'arth stones on the spot, and if that hartful old cat wasn't a-watchin' me from the wine waults unbeknown, and give 'im a shillin' for 'is bargain, and 'ad it done up like new, and 'ad it at Mrs. Crockett's weddin' thro them two a-makin' it up; and Brown's own sister 'eard 'er boastin' of 'avin' done me. So in course I ain't no occasion to 'old with St. Paul's, tho' a noble edifice, no doubt, and one as I shall stick up for adornin' So means to be ready at any time as I might be wanted; 'cos in course if St. Paul's was to be burnt down, why they'd want parties to prove all manner. Not as I'm one to bear mallis, not even agin a werger, so I wouldn't make no complaints of 'im, though 'urt at the time. But in course if the judge should ask me a plain question, I gives 'im a plain anser, thro' not a-oldin' with no Luies, nor Wollys, nor yet Onslers nor Brown, as is a disgrace to 'is name, but isn't the only one as I'd punish for 'is lies and impidence; and as to a eatin'-ouse, thank goodness no one a-belongin' to me ever kep' one, tho' I 'ave knowed 'em 'ighly respectable and olesome food, and not parties as would give a judge any of their cheek, as did ought to be respectable, partikler on the bench, as they calls it, as is next to Queen Wictorier's own throne.

Not as even judges is safe from impidence, cos look at some pris'ners, as will cheek 'em up to the werry last, the same as Wolly ; but then, in course, that were contemp' of court, as even Parlymint weren't a-goin' to stand, any more than one of them magistrits down in Westminster, as 'ad 'is nose broke jest across the bridge thro' a wile, drunken 'ussey as he'd give a week to, a-throwin' of 'er shoe at 'is 'ead, and ketched 'im with a clinker, so give 'er three months on the spot, as she said she could do on 'er 'ead, but'll change 'er tune no doubt afore she comes out, as time don't pass that over lively in prison ; and so Wolly thought, and paid the money, but 'ad better take care, cos he ain't out of the wood, if he goes about abusin' the judges, as'll be attackin' of the Bishops next, as is quite a new fashion come in, for I'm sure I shouldn't never 'ave dreamt as anyone would dare to cheek a judge, tho' there's no 'tellin' where impidence won't stop, now-a-days ; for well I remembers them Townsin boys a-bein' that owdacious, as they took and pelted the beadle with snowballs, with 'im a-standin' full fig, as the sayin' is, with 'is cock 'at and beefsteak collar, a-lookin' that noble on the steps of Spital-field Church, a-waitin' for the Lord Mare and Aldermen as was a-comin' to 'ear a sermon, as took 'im right below the chest, and I considers a reg'lar blow at the Constitution ; and a fine church too,

partikler that day as I were last there, with the bells a-ringin' enuf to stun you, thro' both Miss Tuselwells bein' married the same day, as was two tripe-dressers' dorters, and married brothers in the leather line, as was a good match.

I were not sorry when poor Mrs. Clifdin wished me good night, for she won't never take nothink, not so much as a cup of tea, and ain't a cheerful party, thro' 'avin' berried three 'usbans and nine children under the month, and been burnt out twice, besides shipwrecked off the Cape, and all thro' the Injin Mutiny; and as I'd a good bit of packin' to do, I weren't sorry to see 'er back, as only 'opes as the Comit will come and put 'er out of 'er misery, as is all werry fine for 'er; but some on us bears life pretty well, tho' it is a burdin, as the sayin' is, but not for me at Margit, with the sea a-lookin' that fresh, and parties all that 'appy as thko' there weren't no sorrers in the world, with srimps and 'ot twists for breakfast, and shoulder of lamb and peas for dinner, with a bit of fish to eat up the cold meat with next day, and as nice a fruit pie as you'd wish to eat from the pastry cooks, and them nice buff shoes as is so easy to the tread, and cool to the foot, as sets Brown's foot off, with a straw 'at, and 'is noosepaper in the shade, as is 'appier than the Hemperor of Roosher, with no Poles a-'angin' over 'is 'ead, a-owin' of 'im a spite;

not but wot, for my part, I'd rather 'ave a Hemperor over me than one of these 'ere rottin' republics, as any cadger may be the 'ead on, and no one ain't got no respects for, cos, as I were a-sayin' at Mrs. Padwicks, over tea, last Sunday was a week, I says, "Let's look up to somebody, cos if you can't look up, life ain't worth 'avin', in my opinion, jest the same as 'Merryker, where parties boast as they ain't got no betters, and that's why they can't get on over there, and never will; and it's all jealousy, cos they're as fond of fine names as their neighbours, only them as ain't got 'em can't abear as others should 'ave 'em; but, law bless you, it'll come some day like the rest of the world, cos 'Merrykins is 'uman natur arter all, like the rest on us, and a many on 'em means well, but they've got 'old of the wrong end of the stick, as the sayin' is, they're a-tryin' to build the garrets afore they've dug out the cellars proper."

"What do you mean by that, Mrs. Brown," says Mrs. Smallfield, as 'ad come in to tea, thro' wantin' to see me, as were a-goin' to hemigrate to 'Merryker, cos he never 'adn't settled to nothink since he took and smashed in the plate-glass line."

Well, it so 'appened as that good soul, Mrs. Trimble and she were a-takin' tea with us, as says, afore I could anser, "Ah! I do like 'Merryker, cos there you gets edication."

“Ah!” I says, “they don’t get wot I calls edication, as is bein’ taught to respect their betters; but ’owever should they, when they’re taught all that there rubbish about everybody bein’ as good as everybody else, and no respect for parents nor elders, and I’m sure as is a-goin’ out of fashion over there, for,” I says, “there’s no walkin’ thro’ the streets for the boys now-a-days, and the gals pretty nigh as bad, as the more they’re kep’ in school the more wilder they seems when they’re let out, and come a-runnin’ slap into you, a-doublin’ of you up, and them cats a-flyin’ up in your face, and the lang-widge enuf to make your blood run cold, as the sayin’ is; and I’m sure if I’d a young family to bring up agin they might fine me, but send the children to school I wouldn’t, for to be contaminated with sich companions.”

“Well,” said poor Mrs. Trimble, “you must send ’em to school, or else they won’t never get no edication.”

I says, “Wot do you call edication, I should like to know.”

Says Mrs. Trimble, “Why, larnin’, to be sure.”

“Well,” I says, “any fool knows that in course, but larnin’ wot?”

“Why,” she says, “j’ograffy, readin’ and ritin’, siferin’, and ’istory, with French, and the use of the globes throwed in.”

I says, "I don't see wot's the good in the use of a globe myself; but if it's only throwed in, why, in course they don't charge it as a extra, cos it's them extras as makes school bills mount up so; for I knowed a party as 'ad six shillin's a year charged in the bill for shoe strings, and 'is little boy wore lastic sides; so took 'im away directly."

"Well," said Mrs. Trimble, "I do like to know a little 'istory."

"Well," I says, "I don't care much about it for my part, cos it's nothink but lies, jest like Jack Sheppard; so I never believes a word on it myself, cos in course it's like the noosepapers, as rites oppersite sides, jest to please their customers, and nobody else don't care wot they says, cos everyone reads that paper as he agrees with, and so it is with 'istory, as Brown 'ave read a deal on to me, and he can't a-bear the name of Queen Lizzybeth; but then there is them as calls 'er good Queen Bess, as seems to me as she were a nasty, spiteful, wicked, old devil, jest like old Harry, as she were the true child on; but I ain't a-goin' to be called a hignorant hass at my own cousin's tea-table, as was Miss Pilkinton's sinnivations, tho' she did keep in the words, and I'll lay a wager as I can anser as many questions in 'istory within a month as any on you, bar none, from the Romans downwards, as didn't ought to be set upon, tho' they are Catholics, as

old King George wouldn't never tolerate, tho' I 'ave 'eard it said as them Royal families was Catholics in their 'arts, but didn't dare own to it for fear of Parlymint a-impeachin' on 'em, as might end in their all on 'em 'avin' of their 'eads cut off, like Mary Queen of Scots; as was in my opinion all Queen Lizzybeth's nasty jealous ways, as couldn't a-bear as anyone should be more 'and-somer as 'erself, as must 'ave been a ugly wretch, and every time she looked in the glass flew into a reg'lar rage, and tore 'er wig off, and 'ad a new one of another colour, but couldn't change 'er 'ead. So I means to read myself, and make Brown read to me every evenin' nothink but 'istory, as will please Brown, and in no time I shall be even with them Merrykins, as is always a-blowin' and boastin' about their edication, jest like Mrs. Trewbin over in Merryker, a-talkin' to me about 'er ancisters."

So I says to 'er, "Ah! you must know a deal about it, as can trace nearly all your ancisters up to the Newgate Calendar."

She flew in sich a rage, and said I was the most hignorant, cross-grained, thick-skulled old cuss, as she'd often 'eard speak of Hinglish hignorance and prejerdis, but 'adn't never met with it afore, as there wasn't no gettin' nothink thro' my wool, thro' my bein' a reg'lar prejerdised old Britisher.

So I says, "Never mind me, but jest look at

'ome, as in course can't 'elp 'avin' no 'istory, cos you ain't got no kings and queens to rite about, and in course nobody can't rite a 'istory about costers, and convicts, and Chartist, and sich rabble as no one won't care to read about, and will be quite forgot in a 'underd years, like old General Washingtub, as took and turned rebel agin King George, as he'd took a hoath of legiance to; and them parties wants to make him out a swell, an old Yankee Doodle rebel. I like them Yankees, when I were over there, a-callin' the others Down South Rebs. Why," I says to one or two on 'em, "you did ought to glory in 'em, as is only a-followin' your noble Washingtub's footsteps. So it's all rubbish any on you a-talkin' about rebellion."

"Ah!" says Mrs. Smallfeeld, "my 'usban' always says as you'll 'ave a reg'lar republick 'ere before twenty years is over, or when Queen Wictorier drops."

"Ah!" I says, "no doubt your 'usban' knows best; but," I says, "I wish as my 'ead mayn't never ake till we gets a republick."

"Ah!" she says, "pre'aps not now, so long as you've got the Hemperor of Roosher to back up the Royal family, as is a tyrant."

I says, "Rubbish," as if all the hemperors as ever was born could back up a Royal family 'ere, as we didn't care about, or as didn't be'ave proper.

“No,” I says, “Queen Wictorier’s children is like ’erself, long to rain over us, as the sayin’ is, if only they be’aves theirselves, as kings and queens did ought to, as no doubt they will, thro’ bein’ brought up proper, with a good esample afore ’em, cos it ain’t no use parents a-tellin’ children not to do things as they sets ’em a bad esample in doin’ ; but,” I says, “let’s drop pollytics and drink our native land, as will prosper and be free so long as it don’t give in to them teatotalers, as will be our destruction.”

So poor Mrs. Smallfeeld went ’ome with a ’eavy ’art, thro’ bein’ one as loves ’er native land ; and as to Mrs. Trimble, she were decided a little bit on, as the sayin’ is, and would sing Rool Britannier on the door-step, as made me ’urry ’ome, thro’ bein’ on the stroke of twelve, as settin’ up so verrry late don’t suit me. Partickler now as I dreams that ’eavy sometimes, as in course takes the strength out of your sleep, so don’t refresh you ; but, as I were a-sayin’ no one ’ave ever ’ad dreams more real than me, tho’ Brown, he is downright rude over them, a-sayin’ as they’re quite as sensible as wot I says when awake ; but he’s like all men, as will ’ave their joke, and I’m sure no remark of ’isn wouldn’t never put me out, tho’ I don’t like jeerin’ in the general way ; but as to them dreams wot I ’ad about these ’ere Hemperors together, I thought as they’d

reg'lar wake us up if anythink could, so, in course, felt that disappointed when the Hemperor of Roosher come and went off agin, jest for all the world like a flash of lightnin' in a close carridge, as is all explained now as the Comit is wisible to the naked heye, as we could see easy from our leads, as is a thing as them 'stronomers is always a-foretellin' things by, and in my opinion is the reason of them strikes and lock-outs, all over the country; cos there never wasn't sich things 'eard on afore, as servants a-strikin' for wages, as will end in bloodshed, as sure as my name's Martha, cos, in course, the poor must go to the wall, as the sayin' is, in the long run, and then when a-starvin' will come to bread riots, as will be shot down like dogs, accordin' to laws of society, as, in my opinion, is reg'lar rotten at the core, as the sayin' is; cos, in course, if one man's got millions, why, there must be thousands as is pinched for a bit of bread, and in course a man as 'ave got the money, he can keep 'underds of 'ands at work, and while each on 'em is a-earnin' two or three pounds a day for 'im, he don't pay 'em above two or three shillin's, as is wot they can't live at; and then there's young gals as can earn more, in proportion, than a workin' man, as makes so many on 'em the dressed-up forard things they are; and if they was dorters of mine, I'd rather see 'em dressed quiet, and good 'ands at work, so as to

make good wives for poor men, as is the best thing, cos wot is it now but all bein' sham young ladies and gentlemen, as brings ruin on both.

Ah ! we're all too apt to forget, as my dear mother did used to say, as we've only got one life to live, and can't 'ave our chance over agin, as is wot I said to poor Mary Ann Tupper, when 'er and young Seabright were a-goin' to make a match on it, over seven years ago, and come to Mrs. Padwick's the Sunday afore they was married, tossed off as fine as 'orses, and 'im in lavender gloves, and a coat flower, as they said were like the Prince of Wales, and as I'd knowed 'er from a child, leastways, afore she were born, I give 'er a bit of a-talkin' to, thro' a-knowin' as she were flighty, and 'er a-tellin' me as she'd only got thirty shillin's a-week, and I says, "And quite enuf too, if you're a-goin' to be sensible, and not go on as if it was three pounds."

"Oh !" she says, "I've got a stock of clothes, and two silk dresses."

"Well," I says, "is he out of debt ?"

"Oh !" she says, "nothink but 'is tailor."

I says, "'Is tailor indeed ; he ain't no right with no tailors' bills, but did ought to pay for wot he puts on."

She says, "It's true as 'is salary's small, but he sometimes makes as much as twenty pounds over a race."

I says, "Wot? do you mean as he's one of them bettin' men?"

She says, "Oh, dear, no; only puts a trifle on a 'orse as he's sure will win."

I says, "'Ow can he be sure, as is talkin' nonsense. Well," I says, "you knows your own business best, leastways you thinks you do; but take my advice, and wean 'im from them bettin' ways."

She says, "Oh! that I never shall, cos he's done so well lately that he's a-talkin' of givin' up 'is sitivation and a-takin' to the turf altogether, as they calls it."

"Well," I says, "I'm sorry to 'ear it, as 'ave brought thousan's to misery."

Well, she took and larfed it off, and when I asked 'er about 'er parents' consent she said as she weren't a-goin' to study no parents, as made me shake my 'ead; cos in my opinion no blessin' don't foller them 'eadstrong parties, and I didn't fancy that young man's talk, as were all bounce, and took 'is sperrits and water twice as strong as Brown, and made 'er keep a-takin' sips out of 'is glass, as meant dippin' of 'er beak in pretty deep, as the sayin' is.

I don't 'old with sperrits as a 'abit for young people, as is a fine thing in illness and for them as is gettin' on in life; but if a young man drinks 'ard, ten to one but wot 'is wife won't foller suit.

I'd see 'er once or twice arter she married, and always dressed out werry flash, as were always one of them parties as 'ave a fine dress on and not fit to be seen underneath, the same as Mrs. MuCullick, as 'ad 'er clothes blown over 'er 'ead turnin' a corner agin Brill's Baths at Brighton, as brought to light things as soap and water was downright strangers to, as is wot I can't abear to go to bed without a-washin' my 'ands and face, for fear of suddin illness in the night, as is why I likes my bed-room always kep that tidy, and folds up Brown's things for 'im.

Well, I was a-walkin' along on the Fort at Margit, as I'd gone down to thro' not bein' strong, the fust Sunday as we was there, and I see a stout red-faced party in a 'at as smiled in passin', as I thought I knowed the face on; but one does see sich a many faces at Margit, as I didn't make out whether this were one as I knowed or not, and don't 'old with starin' at parties as is unbeknown. So I passed on, and the next day I were on the sands a-settin' a-listenin' to them negro blacks, as is werry amusin' in their ways, and then 'eard someone a-singin' werry sweetly about "Good bye, sweet'art."

"Ah!" I says to myself, "that's the song for them as is goin' by the boat, Monday mornin'," not but wot the rail takes most on 'em now, as is werry

different to when I fust knowed Margit, thro' bein' there once when quite a young gal, and the hoys, as was sailin' wessels, 'adn't done a-runnin', cos many parties wouldn't trust theirselves to steam, as might blow up, and were aboard one myself as broke down thro' a-racin', and 'ad to be picked off by the oppersition boat, and the ladyas I were with lost everythink but wot she stood up in for more than a week.

So I was a-settin' a-thinkin' wot a change it were since I were a gal, when there wasn't no new 'ouses on the Fort, and Awley Square were all the go.

Alderman Wittles did used to stop at the Dook's 'Ead, as 'ad fust rate port wine, as parties come far and near to drink, as ain't thought so much on nowadays. I remembers that old jetty as is underneath that one as we walks on now, and a werry orkard place it were with the tide a-comin' in, as would come up in the middle, a-leavin' of the hend quite dry. As is 'ow Mr. Wandel got old Mrs. Wobbles to be 'is'n, thro' a-askin' 'er with the water all round 'em, as give 'erself up for lost, and so said the word as give 'im two thousan' a year, as was only a draper's assistant as 'ad follerd 'er from Chigwell Street; but she 'ad the best on 'im, for she outlived 'im many a year, thro' bein' 'ard on ninety-three when she died, as is a great hage, but nothink to Jerusalem in the Bible, as was a many 'underds.

Well, while I was a-settin' all alone, for parties 'ad gone 'ome to their dinners, that singin' party passed me with 'er gittar, and stops as if she were a-lookin' at somethink on the sands, and arter a bit she says—

"Mrs. Brown, don't you know me, as am Mary Ann Tupper as were?" and then she begun a-cryin'

"Ah!" I says, "so you are;" but I were a-goin' to say 'ow awful you're altered, but in course checked myself thro' not a-wantin' to 'urt 'er feelins. So I took 'er 'and, as were 'ot and feverish, and I says, "Wotever's brought you to this?"

"Oh!" she says, "distress, Mrs. Brown," and then she give way.

So I says, "Come, come, you're low, but you mustn't take on. Come with me." So I took 'er to my lodgings, as wasn't far, and give 'er somethink to eat; leastways tried to make 'er 'ave a somethink, but, law, I could see as she 'adn't no appetite only for drink. So I says, "'Owever is it, Mary, as you've come to this?"

"Oh!" she says, "misery and poverty, as 'ave drove me to sing in the streets."

I says, "That's no disgrace, my dear, if you're a-pickin' up a 'onest penny, as the sayin' is. Why, you needn't blush over it; but," I says, "can you get a livin' at it?"

She says' "But a poor one, and it ain't for myself, it's for 'im."

I says, "Wot, your 'usban'—can't he work?"

She didn't say nothink, and then she begun a-cryin'.

I says, "Is he ill?"

She give a nod, and says, "The doctor says there's 'opes if he could get up 'is strength as 'ave been in the 'ospital three months, and then was sent 'ere, as they say is fine hair for the chest."

"Oh!" I says, "then he's down here."

"Yes," she says, "lodgin' close up agin the old church."

"Well," I says, "I'll come and see 'im this werry evenin' "

She says, "Not this evenin', for I shall be out till it's dark, as I goes over to Ramsgit."

"Well," I says, "I'll come and see 'im soon if he's alone."

She says, "I don't leave 'im alone, the people of the 'ouse looks arter 'im, and he can make 'em 'ear easy."

I says, "Is he in bed?"

"Yes," she says, "since the weather 'ave been that 'eat, he ain't 'ad no strength to get up."

Some'ow or other I didn't fancy 'er way, and thought she smelt strong of sperrits when she fust spoke; so I says to myself, I'll go this werry

hevenin' and look arter that poor feller, but kep' my own counsil, as the sayin' is, cos I thought I should like to know 'ow they was a-goin' on, and, if in real distress, could let 'er mother know, as I'd see a few months ago, and told me she was afraid they was a-goin' on bad.

But she says, "My 'usban' won't 'ear 'er name."

Well, that poor thing, tho' stout, I see were nothink but a bloatered body as looked like drink, and seemed all of a fidget to be off, and were sorry as she'd spoke, and didn't much care about givin' me the address; so I asked if she were in want of anythink.

She says, "No, not immediate."

So I let 'er go, a-thinkin' as I'd go to 'er 'ome, and see 'ow the land lay, as the sayin' is, afore I did any more. I don't think as ever I set eyes on sich a livin' skelinton as that man Seabright were, in a room not big enuf to swing a cat in, as the sayin' is, with sich a bed; and, oh! poor creetur, the dirt.

So I says to him arter a bit, "Can't you 'ave your bed made?"

"Oh!" he says, "I'm too miserable to carc; let me alone. I know I'm dyin', and I've been a bad lot, and brought that poor gal to misery and want."

So I spoke to the woman of the 'ouse, as weren't a bad sort, tho' poor, and asks 'er if she 'adn't got a better room, as this were brilin' work for any one as is so bad.

She says, "Bad indeed, and it's a wonder as he's alive; and I'd 'ave 'ad em both out if the doctor 'adn't said he were dyin' "

I says, " You must 'ave a 'ard 'art to turn sich poor creeturs into the street."

She says, "'Ard 'art! why, they did ought to be in the workus; and if she comes home agin in the state as she did last night, I'll slam the door in 'er face."

I says, " Wotever do you mean? "

" Why," she says, " wot I means is drink, for that's wot it is as 'ave brought 'im down to this; and as to 'er, she'll pick up as much as seventeen or eighteen shillin's in a morning, as I knows, for I've turn'd out 'er pockets when she's come 'ome, not able to stand, by three o'clock, and 'im a-ravin' and a-cravin' for drink, as is pison to 'im; and they're a bad lot."

So I said as I 'ad knowed 'er quite respectable.

" Well, then," she says, " she's a long way off that now."

I says, " Somethink did ought to be done for that poor creetur."

“ Oh ! ” she says, “ it’s no use a-tryin’ to do anythink ; and I’ll ’ave ’im took to the infirmary if she comes ’ome agin in licker, cos, tho’ my place is ’umble, it’s always been respectable, as wouldn’t ’ave took ’er in if I’d knowed she were a street singer, as ’ave knowed better days myself, and kep’ a respectable lodgin’ ’ouse near Wellclose Square, in the name of Simmons, over seventeen years, as was principally forriners, and never ’ad a winder broke, nor yet even a cry of murder all that time.”

So I says, “ Is she constant in licker ? ”

She says, “ I might say always ; and last night she sat on the floor for ’ours, as couldn’t lift up ’er ’ead.”

“ Well, then,” I says, “ let’s do a somethink for that poor dyin’ feller.”

I says, “ ’Ave you got another room, cos,” I says, “ I couldn’t see a dog layin’ dyin’ like that, and I don’t think as you considers ’im so ill as wot he really is.”

She said as she were too poor to let them ’ave the best room for that low rent as they paid.

“ So,” I says, “ we’ll see about that,” and agreed as I’d pay the extra if she’d make up the bed ; and I walked myself out and bought ’im a clean night shirt, and didn’t talk to ’im much, for

he were that low, till 'is wife come in, as was jest on nine, thro' it a-turnin' out a wet evenin' at Ramsgit.

So when she come in, I met 'er at the door, and seein' she weren't sober, I told 'er as I'd come to see 'im, and said as he must be shifted.

She begun a-sayin' she'd only got one and eightpence in the world.

So I says, "Don't you mind, let me wash 'is face and 'ands, and put 'im on clean things."

She says, "Oh! Mrs. Brown, don't say as he's wuss, let me go to 'im;" and into the room she rushes, and says, "Oh! my darlin', here's a something as will do you good," and if she didn't bring out a bottle as 'ad whiskey in it, and was a-pourin' 'im out a glass.

I says, "Do you want to kill the man on the spot," and takes the glass out of 'er 'and.

He says, in a 'oller voice, "Give it me, give it me," quite eager like.

I says, "Never, it'll choke you."

She says, "He've been ordered it by the doctor," and walks into the next room.

So I goes up to the bed, and to see 'ow that poor soul 'eld out 'is 'and for the glass.

So I give 'im a little drop of cold brandy and water, as he wouldn't take, and sunk back quite exhausted like.

So I calls out, and Mrs. Simmons come in, a-sayin' as that drunkin beast 'ad gone out.

I says, "Call 'er back for mussy sake, for the poor man ain't got 'arf a 'our's life in 'im."

She says, "Call 'er back, indeed. Why, I might go thro' 'arf the public-'ouses in Margit, and not find 'er."

So I goes back to the poor feller, as all he could say were "Mercy ! mercy !" twice over like that, and then he never spoke no more, and died without a struggle.

So Mrs. Simmons she said as she must send to the parish, for she was sure that woman couldn't pay.

I says, "Don't do that, for he come of decent people, and 'er friends is respectable. So I'll see 'im berried and you paid."

It wasn't till jest on twelve as that woman come to the door and begun a-knockin', so I goes down to 'er, and the moment she see me, she begun a-larfin' and a-sayin', "Ullo, Martha ! 'ow are you, old lady ?"

Says Mrs. Simmons, a-comin' up, "Now you jest walk off, I won't 'ave you 'ere."

She says, "I'll come in, my 'usban's ill and wants me."

"Your 'usban's dead," 'ollers Mrs. Simmons. "you drunken wretch."

I says, "Oh! wot a way to tell 'er," and looks to see 'ow she bore it.

She were deadly pale, and 'er bonnet were off 'er 'ead, and all 'er 'air down; and she said "Dead!" and then give a scream as seemed for to wake up all the place, and up came two perlice.

I says to Mrs. Simmons, "For mussy sake let 'er come in;" but law, she didn't wait another minit, but run like mad a-screamin' down the street.

I says to the perlice, "Run arter 'er, as will do 'erself some mischief."

"Ah!" says one on 'em, "she've been up to that game for a long time."

I follered all along the street as the perlice went, but in course couldn't keep up with them, and it were a dark, wet night, so couldn't tell which way she'd gone.

Me and Mrs. Simmons set a-watchin' till daylight, and then went to the perlice station, as 'ad lost all trace on 'er; as well they might, for she'd been and run straight into the sea, leastways 'er body were found on the rocks, close agin the bath-in' place near the Fort, but whether she walked over the hedge of the pressypitch in the dark, or done it for the purpose, nobody couldn't never tell; so they let 'er 'ave the benefit of the hact, as the sayin' is, and didn't bring it in fell o'er the sea, but

gave 'er Christshun berrial, as the sayin' is, along with 'im, and 'er parents come to the funeral, as was quite respectable, tho' they said as they couldn't fret arter 'er, as 'ad took to drinkin' like a fish, as the sayin' is.

"Ah!" I says, "it's werry orful."

"Yes," says the old lady, "and it's sich cases as makes me think as the teatotalers is right."

I says, "Bless your 'art, no teatotalers won't stop it, and as to forbiddin' licker bein' sold to stop drunkenness, you might as well fill up all the ponds and wells to stop parties from drownin' themselves. No," I says, "them as will abuse wot is sent for our good, and make beasts of theirselves, ain't got no proper feelin's, so nothink won't keep them from goin' to the bad, either thro' drink or some other bad ways."

I was a good deal upset by all them things, so my first week at Margit didn't do me no good, and when Brown come down along with Mrs. Padwick on the Saturday, they both didn't think me up to the nocker, as the sayin' is, in looks, and I certingly did feel werry down, but the sight on 'em did me good and cheered me up, for I were quite glad to see Brown a-lookin' so well, as do wear wonderful, and Mrs. Padwick, I'm that fond on, and weren't sorry to see Miss Pilkinton, as come bv the boat on Sunday.

When me and Brown was alone I told 'im all as 'ad 'appened, and then I says, "Wot's the news?" for I felt as if I'd been on a dissolute island.

"Oh!" he says, "nothink in partikler."

I says, "'Ave the man in the moon come down to see Queen Wictorier?"

"No," he says, "nor yet your friend the Hemperor of Morrocker."

I says, "I'm glad on it, for I'm sure, poor dear, she must 'ave been drove mad with that Shah, a nasty beast, as 'ad 'is wittles killed in the settin'-room, and I'm sure I should 'ave been sorry to 'ave slep' in the same bed arter 'im, as no doubt they never let that young Duchess know as it were the same, cos 'er pa'd 'ave made a nice fillyloo over it if he'd 'ave knowed; and it's well as them two Hemperors didn't come together, thro' both bein' in the leather line; so wouldn't 'ave pulled together, not 'armonious if forced to a double-bedded room, as will 'appen in the best regulated families, with a 'ouse full of wisitors. In course Roosher leather 'ave the pull in the smell, as a little on is all werry well, and a fine thing for the moths. But the Morrocker looks a deal more prettier thro' bein' white, red, and blue, and red was all the go once on a time, partickler for children, and I well remembers 'avin' a pair of red Morrocker shoes as I chose myself, as everyone said set a small foot off, tho' I

were under four years, as my aunt always would 'ave it give me corns, and shows wot a impression them things make.

"But," I says, "she can't 'ave em both in the same pallis, let alone the same room, cos they'll be sure to get a-talkin' busyness, and come to words, as I well remembers Mr. Stringer a-doin', as lodged with Mrs. Padwick, thro' a-travellin' in the patent leather, as met Mrs. Padwick's 'usban', as were all in the upper leather, and the row as they 'ad over supper, I shan't forget, all thro' me a-sayin' as patent leather would draw the foot in 'ot weather, thro' not a givin' like the calf. So one of them Hemperors must 'ave stopped at Winsor, and the other in town. But let's 'ope as whoever comes will all go off well; tho," I says, "I must say as I should like to see that there Hemperor of Morrocker, thro' 'avin' 'eard so much about 'im in Wittin'ton and 'is Cat, as was that overrun with rats, as, in my opinion, is in general servants' faults, thro' a-throwin' of bones and things in the dust-'ole, as intices 'em; cos, like their feller-creeturs, they won't never come where they don't get no encouragement, as is jest the same with 'uman bein's, cos in course if Queen Wictorier 'adn't always give them forriners that 'arty welcome, they wouldn't never 'ave come over any more than rats in swarms. Tho' I 'ave 'eard say as rats come original from

'Anover, along with King George, as were a nasty beast, and be'aved shameful to 'is wife, as was the way with them Georges, as can jest remember Queen Carerline's funeral, as shot a young man, in tryin' to force 'er body thro' Temple Bar, tho' some says it were Tyburn Turnpike, so, poor thing, she was to give trouble in 'er coffin, as wasn't nice in 'er ways, I've 'eard say, but 'adn't no right to be shet out of Westminster Abbey, a-goin' there a-purpose to be crowned, and then struck 'er out of the Prayer Book, jest to please 'im, as couldn't 'ave been no gentleman to 'ave stooped to sich mean ways with 'is own lawful wife, as is wot I calls mean spite, for she were as good as 'im, any day, thro' bein' 'is own cousin, tho' werry plain, I've 'eard say; but always pitied the Princess Charlotte, poor gal, as 'ad a 'ard fate, and I've 'eard my dear mother say, tho' not pretty, were that pleasin' as everyone loved 'er.

"But, law, she'd be a old lady now, if livin', and where Queen Wictorier would 'ave been, goodness knows.

"But tho' I don't old with too many forriners a-comin', yet in course the Hemperor of Roosher were quite right to come to see 'ow the young couple was a-gettin' on, as I see 'em myself in the park, a-ridin' werry comfortable in a 'open two-orse shay, like Darby and Jones, as the sayin' is,

tho' I daresay they'd rather be at Winsor, or anywhere's on the quiet.

"So there'll be 'igh jinks, as the sayin' is, when that black hemperor comes, as I 'ope can't 'ave no ideer of askin' to marry that there Princess Beetriss, as is the only one left, poor dear; as could only be that there Hemperor of Morrocker's impidence, and as no doubt would like to 'ave a nice young lady for a wife; but ketch 'er a-goin' over there among them barbaries."

"Oh! dear no," says Miss Pilkinton; "you means barbarians."

I says, "No I don't, for Barbary is the place, so Barbaries must be the people."

She give a toss of the 'ead, but 'ad to be civil, thro' 'avin' dropped in to tea, as is a thing as Brown don't care about anyone's a-doin', cos it's a meal as he likes to enjoy, in 'is shirt sleeves, by the seaside, without 'is boots, and can read 'is paper over it.

He made 'isself werry pleasant, thro' bein' the gentleman, and Miss Pilkinton, she is a lady, thro' 'er father 'avin' been somethink about the pallis, in old King Willyam's time, as wasn't wanted when he were dead, any more than the party as 'ad to look arter the winders, as got the sack along with a good many more, when the old man died, as don't seem to 'ave been a bad sort, tho' there was a good many stories told about 'im.

Says Miss Pilkinton, "Don't let's talk about 'im afore the hoppersite sect, as I considers Mr. Brown; for really some of them goin's on of 'is'n, don't bear the light."

"Well," says Brown, "if everybody's hacts was dragged out afore the public, like them things as Royal families does, there'd be a nice turn out."

"Ah!" I says, "there would indeed; cos," I says, "look at old Sinful, as is down 'ere, livin' next door; wot would he 'ave been if he'd been a crowned 'ead, as is a nice old tyrant, now he's only a retired hexciseman, as 'ave 'ad three wives, and werry nigh got a fourth, and would 'ave but for me a-blowin' the gaff to 'is dorter."

"As weren't no busyness of yourn," says Brown.

"In course not," says I, "but it's more than flesh and blood could bear to see that old beast a-goin' on like that, as did ought to thank me, for a nice life she'd 'ave lead 'im, and serve 'im right too."

I couldn't 'elp a-smilin when I see 'im arrive at next door the day afore Brown come, little a-dreamin' who were 'is naybour, as he were bound to love like 'isself; and the scowl as he give me a-settin' at the open bow-winder 'avin' of 'is tea, when I come out at the door, I do think as the sight on me must 'ave made 'im swaller a srimp with the 'ead and tail on, for he 'ad a fit of corfin' as I 'eard all the way down the street, tho' the boy German

band were a-playin', as he corfed right thro' In course I didn't even look at 'im, tho' didn't care about speakin', in course, arter 'is conduct in goin' to law over that lead pipe and losin' the day, thro' me a-provin' of it to be a axcidence, as the gal could swear to; as wouldn't 'ave done it to my bitterest henemy, tho' he 'ad pisoned our fowls and shot at the cat.

Not as I bore 'im mallis, not the least in the world, no more than the babe unborn, as the sayin' is, and 'owever could I tell as he were a-tryin' to sodder the lead pipe of 'is water-butt, as he must be a old fool to try sich a job, as weren't brought up to the plummin' and glazin', tho he said as he 'ad a uncle as were in that line; but that weren't no reason for 'im to get a ladle full of sodder, a 'eatin' of one of them little tinkers' fires as he'd put on the top of our wall, as I'm sure he were welcome to the use on, cos I wouldn't be mean enuf to refuse sich a thing to a naybour, as I considers low-lived ways.

Well, there he was on the ladder, a-fixin' of the pipe, leastways so it turned out, with the sodder on the wall, as I never see when I went to the staircase winder to water them plants, and 'owever could I see thro' iron bars, as is put up for a per-tecton agin thieves, and when I see that fushier all dried up I didn't make no more ado over it, but steps back in my bed-room and gets the jug,

a-thinkin as a good drop of water would rewive the plant, so takes and pours it all over it, and were a-goin' back with the jug when I 'ears a bang outside, and someone a 'owlin' murder, with a 'oller crash.

I says, "Some of them Darnley boys a-playin' with fire-arms agin, and ain't satisfied with nearly a-blowin' 'is thumb off last week," when I 'eard screams, and the gal come a-runnin' up, and says, "Oh! please mum 'ave you been a-shyin' water over Mr. Sinful, as 'ave blowed 'im off the ladder and marked 'im for life, thro' the sodder a-esplodin' like gunpowder."

I don't believe as the old willin were 'urt at all, any more than the shock, as would 'appen to anyone, and that's why I can't abear them plummets about, as uses sich dangerous things, as 'ave burnt down more churches than enuf, as is a good thing in the city, cos it saves them the trouble and espence of pullin' 'em down, as certingly ain't no use now; and as to St. Paul's, when I went there one evenin' to 'ear a party preach, he might as well 'ave been a-settin' comfortably by 'is own fireside, for all I could 'ear.

Whether it were the sight of Brown as reminded me of 'ome, or that rabbit-pie as we 'ad for supper, as is a thing I don't care about, but of all the dreams as ever did come into my 'ead, all that night they was reglar wishuns, with all the world in 'em.

Fust I see the Hemperor of Roosher a-lacin' of 'is 'igh-lows on the 'arth-rug, as Queen Wictorier said as she didn't like 'im a-doin', as says to 'er, "I'm in a 'urry to get off to Hems, where I'm out of the way of the Poles."

She says, "Rubbish, there's Poles everywhere."

"Ah!" he says, "you're not so fond of trustin' yourself to the Hirish."

I says, "Wot rubbish. Why," I says, "the Hirish would go mad with joy at the sight of the tip of 'er royal finger."

Says Queen Wictorier, "I never was so 'oorayed at in my life as the Hirish, as is a warm-'arted set, and knows as I loves 'em."

And then I see that Hemperor a-standin' on the jetty, as were a-waitin' to 'ail a steamer as, he said, would take 'im to Hems, as Margit were the shortest way there, as is a place, says he, as I loves.

"Oh yes," I says, "I knows; and nice larks you 'ave there in the Park, and all about, as is werry nigh as lively as Paris did used to be when them Bonyparties was there, and then heverybody always 'ad partikler busyness over in Paris."

"I knows your little games," says the Hemperor; "stow your chaff, you knowin' old sly boots," and he give me a wink as made me draw myself up with a frown, thro' not a-'oldin with them Rooshin ways, as is free.

I says, "If you 'as anythink to say, let me 'ear it."

He says, "Now then, 'ow about this ere young couple, 'ow much can they live on?"

I says, "That depends werry much on where they lives, and the price of things, as waries, cos at the West things is dearer than in the East."

He says, "I'm sure things ain't cheap in the East."

"Well," I says, "it's early days for them to talk about espenses, and I dare say as they can get on for the present."

"Oh!" he says, "they shan't want for nothink, and I won't stand no cold meat, nor washin' at 'ome, as is downright misery, and I 'ates the smell on it in a 'ouse."

I says, "Why, that's wot Brown always says, and loses 'is temper over the sight of Mrs. Challin about the place, as is a party I could recommend if sperrits is kep' out of 'er way, tho' no low-lived langwidge even when a little on; but," I says, "any'ow, them young people can't get on without money."

"I should like to know who can," says the Prince of Wales, as come a-swimmin' up.

I says, "My dear boy, wotever you do, don't go to the Jews, but try it on with Dizzy, as 'ave jest stepped out to get a 'arf a pint, and will come back a-smilin."

Says Dizzy, a-turnin' on me, with a sponge bag on 'is 'ead, "Who are you a-callin' Jews?"

"Oh!" I says, "listeners don't never 'ear no good of theirselves; but wotever are you all a-bathin' 'ere for, tho' I ain't ashamed, for," I says, "I never abuses Jews myself, thro' 'avin' 'ad 'em for naybours, and likes 'em a deal better than many Christshuns; and as to 'oldin' to their religion, I don't believe as any on 'em would give it up, not to be made Bishops, cos they don't believe in 'em; and that's more than you can say of many as calls theirselves Christshuns, cos Brown says as there's Bishops as glories in sayin' as they don't believe a word of them doctrines, as they takes the money for to preach."

Says Queen Wictorier to me, as were settin' on the sands a-tattin', "Mrs. Brown, would your good gentleman like to be a bishop?"

I says, "Law bless your Majesty, no."

"Well," she says, "it's such a bother to get anyone as is 'onest into the place that I'm sick of 'avin' 'em."

Says Beastmark, as come a-swimmin' ashore like a sea-'orse, "Why the doose don't you do as we do, sack the lot?"

"Ah!" I says, "that's cos you've got sich a obstrepilous lot as won't do as they're told to, as is werry different to Queen Wictorier's bishops, as

would do anythink to please 'er; but," I says to Dizzy, as 'ad come out of the water quite chilly, a-goin' to 'ave another glass, "not a drop more."

"Well, then," I says, "you'd better chew a few carryways afore you reads that there speech to Queen Wictorier, as 'ave got sich a nose for busy-ness, and would detect rum in a instant."

So he says, "I do wish as you'd read it to 'er, cos she is so down on me, a-sayin' as I speaks thro' my nose."

"Well," I says, "I'll put in a good word for you, but," I says, "remember, no larks, not when them two Hemperors is a-lookin' on."

So I took that there speech, as I couldn't for the life on me get it up the right way, and felt quite flustered thro' a-feelin' as Queen Wictorier were a-listenin' with all 'er royal ears, for she'd told as she'd been a-tryin' to see that there comit all the mornin' thro' a bit of smoked glass, but must give it up for a bad job.

I says, "I 'ave 'eard say as Injy will be the place to see it from, not but wot at your own Royal Hobservatory at Greenwich they did ought to show it, else wot's the use on 'em."

"Oh!" she says, "it's only kep' up for the look of the thing, and ain't no good now the old penshuners is gone. And a good riddance too, as is much better in the bussims of their families."

"Why," I says, "where am I?"

"This is One Tree 'Ill," says Queen Wictorier.

"Well," I says, "as for that I'm sure a good many on 'em looks as if they was a-dyin'. But," I says, "as we are 'ere let's 'ave lunch, for I've brought my basket, as I always makes a pint on at Greenwich."

"With pleasure," says Queen Wictorier, as were a-settin' that nat'ral under a tree, jest like a angel, and put away 'er tattin', and were a-cleanin' of a pair of gloves with a bit of bread, with that comet a-'angin' over 'er 'ead, as said to me, "Mrs. Brown, gloves is downright ruin, and I really cannot stand cleaned ones, as that stuff as they uses smells like coal tar, and I can't a-bear it near me, and that's why I allows my maids in waitin' a little more, so as not to wear 'em."

"Ah!" I says, "gloves is things as them as is waiters did ought to wear; cos I don't think as a 'eavy thumb looks well on the hedge of a plate as is bein' 'anded, and the best on us can't always command our nails; but, I says, "if I was you, I'd take to white thread, leastways cotton, as is cool wearin', and you can wash in your 'and basin a-goin' to bed, and find 'em 'angin' on a towel in the mornin' as good as new, and suits a 'ot, moist 'and, as no doubt you've often felt, as is my own constitution, and I always says as you're werry like me."

She says, a smilin', "Oh! they ain't for myself, but Beatriss is a-goin' out a good deal jest now, and I really cannot stand it; for wot with gloves, and shoes, let alone sashes, and 'avin' 'er 'air dressed, it runs into a little fortin; and now as that there Rooshin lot is comin', as thinks nothink of 'arf-a-crown, I must let the gal be extra nice, cos they'll turn up their noses at book muslin, and look down on a ribbin in the 'air."

I says, "Let 'em turn up and down too; not but wot it's as well as Beatriss should be up to the knocker, as the sayin' is; cos in course she's a-gettin' on, and I 'ope will make a good match."

"She's not likely to settle like 'er sister," says a red-eaded party, as I knowed were Argyll, as 'ad been dancin' with 'is pipes on the sand.

Says Dizzy to me, "Oh! Mr. MacCullum More, a nice mess you left that Injy Office in."

"I'm sure," says the other, "I took every scrap of everythink I could lay my 'ands on away with me."

"Trust you for that," says Queen Wictorier, with a wink at me, "and sold all the waste paper to one of them cheap weeklies, as is 'ow they can do it for a penny I can't think, and got 'old of some of my private letters."

Says the Hemperor of Roosher, a-'oldin' up a whip "Jest let me tip 'im a bit of this 'ere," but

law, bless you, Maccullim were off like a shot, as the sayin' is ; and small blame to 'im, with nothink but a kilt on.

I says to Queen Wictorier, " I 'ope you've got gas on in 'is room, cos none of them Rooshins aint to be trusted with a candle, as he'd take and eat, jest from the force of 'abit, as the sayin is ; not but wot there's risks with gas, cos thro' not bein' used to it, he might do as a party did as come to lodge with Mrs. Padwick, and took and blowed the gas out the last thing, thro' bein' used to candles in Ingy, and then woke up and struck a light, as sent 'im slap into the fire-place, back'ards, with the four-post bedstead thro' the winder, as shows the power of steam."

Says Queen Wictorier to me, " Wot shall we do to please this 'ere Hemperor ? "

" Well," I says, " All Fours is a noble game, and I did used to like, ' My Bird Sings,' when a gal."

" Oh ! bless you," she says, " I dursn't set 'em down to cards, cos them Rooshins would want to play for money, and if Macullim Mare loses, he flies in sich a rage, and uses sich langwidge, that Wales 'ave been obliged to turn 'im out of the room, and then would keep it up thro' the key 'ole, till I 'ad to threaten 'im, as I'd stop it out of 'is wages, as soon quieted 'im ; cos tho' that generous as he'd give the werry coat off 'is back, thro' never wearin'

one, yet will 'ave 'is own, if only a farthing; as some says Scotchmen would sweep the internal regions for."

Says the Hemperor of Roosher, "Jest let me ketch 'im up a tree near where I'm a-standin', and I'll show 'im 'ow to come out in them short petticoats afore me agin."

I says, "Law, it's second natur' to 'im, poor feller, as likes 'is native land, cos you know the Scotch is that proud, tho' it's as much as many can do to make both ends meet, as the sayin' is, yet won't ask for nothink extra, and no doubt when they got a bit of stuff found, as it wouldn't run to trousers for all the family, they made the best on it, so cut 'em off short at the knees."

"Yes," says Disreely, "as is all their nasty pride, for I knows them as would 'ave let 'em 'ave second'and wardrobes for a old song."

"Well," I says, "there's a lot of old songs in Scotland, as is a deal sweeter than your old wardrobes, as is werry often werry stuffy; and not things as I'd 'ave in my 'ouse, anymore than a second'and bed-stead, as is my 'orrer, with all the soft soap, and turps, as you may let it swim in, and never get rid on 'em, tho' I 'ave 'eard say as the best way is to blow the bed up with carbonic acid gas."

Jest then I 'eard a roar, and a gun a-firin' close

in my ear, as woke me up, tho' my fust thought were as the Prooshins 'ad landed. I looks round for Brown, as 'ad lewanted, as the sayin' is, and when I got up I remembered as it were the Regatter, so downstairs I 'urried, tho' not one to get up in ten minits, as don't old with them 'urried twilights, as Miss Pilkinton calls 'em.

When I got down, there was Brown 'arf thro' 'is breakfast, and Mrs. Padwick a-makin' the tea for 'im, as did smell that refreshin'

I says, "I did ought to polergise, but 'ave 'ad sich a night of dreams."

"Ah," says Brown, "I remembers the way as you'd been a-snortin' and a-snorin' all night, so got up and left you as sound as a church."

I says, "Now," I says, "I do believe as it's this 'ere comit as 'ave come, and seems for to throw a light on heverythink, as the sayin' is; not but wot my dreams ain't been much while you've been away, but come on agin last night, and I could not get the Royal Family out of my 'ead, that I couldn't, not for nights upon nights, as I certingly do take a hinterest in everythink as belongs to Queen Wictorier, bless 'er noble 'art, as is full of feelin's, and a-goin' to see them sojers in the 'ospital, and a-sheddin' of a tear as she did over them when she 'eard all about their suff'rins; so am always glad to 'ear anythink about 'em, not as ever I listens to

Miss Pilkinton, as told us a lot of things as she'd been and read in them low vulgar papers, as is always full of runnin' down their betters, as pretends as they knows wots a-goin' on in the Pallis, and everywhere else. Miss Pilkinton she's orful put out if you won't believe all her Cort news, and 'ad a long story about that there Markiss of Lorne, as I knowed were rubbish, cos I see 'im myself up in the 'Ighlands of Scotland, as were werry perlite. Not as ever I shall forget spendin' of a wet Sabbath, as they calls it at Inwerary; as they did ought to call Inwerainy, for I never did see sich wet, nor yet sich a town; but yet I ain't a-goin' to give in to Miss Pilkinton's rubbish, as says she knowed it were true, cos she 'ad it on fust-rate authority.

I says, "No doubt, as was a penny weekly, I suppose."

She says, "Oh dear no! but them as is about the Pallis."

"Well, then," I says, "they'd better look out, for if it should come to Queen Wictorier's ears as they've been a-gossipin' about 'er or 'er Royal Family, they'll get the sack, if it was Old Dizzy 'isself; cos, in course, she'd rather set to work and do everythink for 'erself, if she's to be talked about that free by them all, as she'll soon give 'em their conjees, as I considers werry bad in servints, a-talkin' even over the wall about wot goes

on in a family, as 'ave led to more rows than enuf in our street alone, tho' I must say I likes naybours as is friendly enuf in the gen'ral way; tho', for my part, I ain't fond of knowin' too much of naybours, as werry oftin leads to borrrerin' of all manner, and that's sure to end bad, cos the dog as can fetch can carry, as the sayin' is; and tho' I'd do anythink in reason for to 'elp a naybour, I do not think as it's right to go on a-lendin' water by the pailful over and over agin, well a-knowin' as there's 've been cut off at the main with three quarters owin', as is jest the same with the gas, as was a downright robbery in them parties where Miss Marlow lodged, as 'ad a pipe from their kitchen a-runnin' into the main as she paid for, as were downright swindling, I considers; but then some parties ain't got no morals over gas and water, as, in course, some one must pay for.

“ But, law bless you, kings and queens is jest like everybody else, and must be talked about; and there is parties as makes the Royal Family a downright study, as were poor Mrs. Bundock's regular daily bread a-readin' the Court Circular, and put on crape up to 'er knees for Prince Albert, jest for all the world as if he'd been a blood relation; as I considered makin' a deal too free myself, in a pawnbroker's widder a-puttin' of 'erself on a footin' with the Royal Family.

"But, law, talkin' of that, Brown, reminds me, 'owever is it as the Hemperor of Morocker never come, as there was all the talk about 'im a-doin' the same as the Hemperor of Roosher."

"Preaps," says Brown, "he weren't never asked. But do drop them crowned 'eads now as you're awake, and let's enjoy Margit, as I means to do by a-settin' quiet and a-drinkin' in the sea hair, as is that bracin' for the nerves, and in your shirt-sleeves seems to blow thro' you."

I says, "Right you are; tho' it don't do to 'ave too much on it, for sure your shirts was tore to ribbins two year ago, thro' bein' 'ung out too near the sea at Pegwell Bay, as in course arf a gale a-blowin' will shiver a main sail, as the sayin' is, so in course even the best Orrix ain't no chance agin it;" but you don't ketch me a-goin' near Pegwell Bay, as werry near proved a watery grave for me, and all thro' that young Purblick's nonsense, as I ain't never spoke to since, a-pretendin' as it were all my fault thro' over-loadin' that donkey, as is the last thing in the world as I would do, thro' a-lookin' on 'em as a feller creetur, as their instinks is far greater werry often, and wouldn't never stoop to the hactions as Christshuns will give in to without no provercations like a donkeys as 'ave their jaws renched, with blows enuf to fell a ox on their backs, and yet will carry anyone as mild as a lamb, tho' known to kick

out behind when drove to it by them boys, as takes a pleasure in it. Not as that were any excuse for young Purblick, as promised me if I'd jine the party he'd never leave the hanimal's 'ead. Cos he wanted me to go for the look of the thing, when he were a-goin' to take 'Melia Blinden out on the sands, as 'er mother wouldn't allow without no third parties, as were quite right in my opinion, thro' young people bein' too fond of their larks.

The werry moment I see them donkeys I says, "They're not up to my weight."

Says the donkey man, "Law, mum, you're a shadder to parties as I takes out every day."

"Well," I says, "I'll go if you can get me on to 'is back."

He says, "I'll do that same," and afore I could say another word two on 'em 'ad me on to the hanimal's back, as certingly were a breather for 'em, and made the donkey stumble at fust.

Miss Pilkinton, as is a reglar old dried 'addick of a figger, she'd gone off on a donkey, a-ridin' beside the shay as Mrs. Blinden and Mrs. Padwick 'ad gone in, as I wanted to jine, only the shay wouldn't 'old three, and that young Purblick begged so 'ard of me to come with them.

Well, we set off, and thro' not 'avin' been in the saddle since a gal, I felt as it shook me frightful, and when the donkey trotted I 'oller'd "Stop!" for I

felt as my teeth would be out of my 'ead hevery hinstant. So the man give 'im a rench at the mouth and stopped 'is trottin'. So 'Melia Blinden and 'er young man was soon out of sight, leastways, out of 'earin', and were a-joggin' on right into the sea. I says to myself, "Wherever can they be a-goin' to, as can't surely be a-runnin' away with 'er on donkey-back, as ain't a amphiherous hanimal as can take 'em out to sea for a wessel to pick 'em up, like sea 'orses. Them men 'ad only started the donkey and 'ad turned back, and the boys as was with me got a-larkin', and it's my opinion as young Pur-blick 'ad give 'em the straight tip, as the sayin is, not to stick to 'im and 'Melia. I'm sure the way as my animal kep a-stumblin' must 'ave pitched me on to my 'ead but for me 'avin' of a firm seat, and as to me a-guidin' on 'im, why I give it up, for every time as I touched the bridle he either took and turned right round, or else stood stock still, till he'heard the boys a-comin' behind 'im, and then would break into a trot as I thought would send all my bones out of my sockets.

The sun were brilin' 'ot, and I couldn't keep up my umbereller, as the weight on seemed to be a-pullin' me sideways off the donkey, and as I were ever so far off them young people, I thought as I'd go back and tell Mrs. Blinden 'ow they'd been and cut away from me; so I give the bridle a pull, and round

went the donkey, and stopped jest in the same place. So I give another pull as made 'im back jest the same. So I thinks to myself, preaps he's a performin' animal as does tricks, and I 'ope won't play none on em ere with me on 'is back.

I couldn't see nothink of the boys, as there wasn't a westment on nowheres, as 'ad gone a-bathin'.

The sun on the sea was blindin' me, so I 'ollers out. Whether it were that as startled the donkey, or wot he took it for I can't say, but of all the rows as he kicked up, a-brayin' jest as if he were a-answerin' me, and then he set off in a gallop towards the sea.

I says, "Preaps he've gone mad with the 'eat, and is a-goin' to drown 'isself," so I ketches at the bridle, and reg'lar pulled 'is 'ead round, but he kep on a-gallopin', as shook me that frightful as I couldn't call out escept jest for all the world as if anyone were a-poppin' their 'ands afore my mouth.

I quite give myself over to a watery grave, for my legs was that cramped, as get off I couldn't, not even with death a-starin' me in the face, as the sayin' is. On goes the donkey, me a-screamin' out all the way, till we was on the hedge of a large pool of water, as I knowed were a sign of the tide comin' in; so I ketched 'old of the donkey's ears a-thinkin' as that must stop 'im, and so it did, for he pulled

up that suddin as he shot me off like a rocket, and it's a mussy as I fell with a splash in that water, as in course weren't that shock to me.

It's a wonder as I come off so easy, and if I adn't, I never should 'ave been alive to tell the tale, as the sayin' is; for if that donkey didn't take and roll 'isself that wiolent, as, if I'd been on 'is back, must 'ave reg'lar pulverised me to powder. As it was, I were a nice reck and ruin, for my gownd 'ad busted out everywheres, and my bonnet and 'air was a-floatin', and if I adn't 'ad the presence of mind to tie my pocket 'ankercher over my 'ead, my brains would 'ave biled over in the sun.

I didn't know wotever to do, for I couldn't get up for ever so long, and that donkey he'd took and walked 'isself off in a trot; and when I was on my feet agin, I couldn't walk, for my things was all a-comin' off, en mask, as the French says. It's a reg'lar providence as I 'ad somethink in my redicule, or I should 'ave fainted dead off; I 'eard parties a-larfin' and talkin' close by, and see a ole lot of young fellers on 'orses a-comin' along.

I shouldn't 'ave so much minded if there'd 'ave been fieldmales with them, but I weren't in no fit state for the oppersite sect, so I 'uddles myself up the best way as I could, and makes for a bathin' machine as were a-standin' there all solingtary, and as luck would 'ave it the door on were open, so in I

goes, and tho' it struck frightful 'ot, I were thankful for the shelter as it give me.

I'd got a few sanwiches in my redicule, and a little cold brandy and water, so the fust thing as I did were to take them refreshments, as brought the life back into me, and the 'eat of that machine was that great as it drored me to sleep, cos I don't remember nothink but Queen Wictorier a-puttin' of 'er 'ead in at the door and a-sayin', "Got room for a little one?"

"I says, "If we 'adn't we'd soon make it, cos," I says, "Mr. Gladstin won't mind a-settin' a little closer to me; and then," I says, "Disreely might come over to our side, and there'd be room for your majisty between them bishops, as is all takin' up more room than there's any occasion for 'em."

Says Gladstin to me in a whisper, "You wait a bit, and I'll 'ave 'em all out like a knife."

Says Disreely, "I don't want 'em my side, for they're always a-naggin' among theirselves, as makes it werry unpleasant for the others, and I wish as they'd take to the knife-board, as is where Spurgin and Mannin' both is."

Says Queen Wictorier to me, "I do love a omnibus' cos it's so amusin' to 'ear 'em all go on, one agin another, partikler the bishops."

I says, "It's a wonder as it don't turn your royal

'ead, as 'ears a differint preacher every Sunday, as all tells you different."

She says, "Oh! bless you, no. I'm 'ead of the Church, and I ain't a-goin' to 'ave my understrappers a-talkin' no nonsense to me."

"Law," I says, "in course you are, and knows what doctrin did ought to be; and in course them preachers knows their place too well to come any of them larks and westments with you."

"Oh!" she says, "one on 'em did try it on one Sunday, as got the kibosh put on 'im pretty sharp, and never showed 'is face in my pulpit no more."

I says, "And serve 'im right; but 'ow about this 'ere public wuship bill, as Brown considers as Gladstin is agoin' to burk?"

Says Gladstin with a grin, "It's only my fun, and if I don't talk 'em all sick on it I don't know who can."

Says Disreely, "I don't care what you do, so long as you don't keep us a-brilin' in Parlymint."

"Well," I says, "you might as well all go, for all the good you've done."

Says Queen Wictorier to Dizzy, "That's a nasty one for you, old man;" and I see 'im glare at me savidge like.

Says Queen Wictorier to me, jest to change the subjie, "Wot's your opinion about this 'ere comit,

as 'ave come down on us like a thousan' of bricks, as the sayin' is."

"Well," I says, "I think as you may expect the man in the moon werry soon, cos in course thro' the sun never a-settin' over your royal 'ead, it's well beknown 'ow fond you are of them forriners; tho' that Shah must 'ave been a buster."

Says Gladstin, "Oh! my eye, 'ere's a go, why they've been and shot Beastmark."

"Ah!" says Queen Wictorier, "I told 'im so, and am glad as my dorter's come away, and enjoyin' of 'erself in town, and will come and spend a quiet week with me at Osbung."

I says, "Well," I says, "I've 'eard say as dry rubbish may be shot anywhere's, and I'm sure if ever there was rubbish it's that old Beastmark, as must be dry sich weather as this, and I'm sure the 'eat in this bus is enuf to stifle anyone, and not a winder made to opin."

Says Queen Wictorier, a-lookin' astern, "Martha Brown, I 'opes you don't 'old with assassinations."

I says, "Never in this world, as is a cowardly murder, and may 'it the rong man, the same as Mr. Drummond at Cherrin' Cross, as were killed for Sir Robert Peel, and jest the same as throwin' witriol, as once fell all over me from a fust floor, and burnt the clothes off my back, as were meant for 'er own 'usban', thro' a family quarrel in Black

'Orse Yard, where I'd gone to the same 'ouse down to the back kitchen to see a party with twins, as did used to work for me, poor thing, and werry nigh died thro' neglect of the parish, with 'er 'usban' in the 'ospital. So I don't 'old with none of them acts."

"You've got your clothes nearly off now," says Mr. Wolly, as 'ad got srimps in 'is white hat on 'is knee, as I'm sure wasn't fresh. So jest then the bus give a orful jerk, as wasn't a bus at all, but a boat as were bein' drove agin the rocks with that wiolence as chucked me from one side to the other, and there was the sea all a-comin' in, and the comit full blaze in my eyes; so I 'ollers 'elp, and a sailor ketches 'old on me, and says, "'Ere wake up," and I says, "Never mind me, but save Queen Wictorier."

He busts out a-larfin', and says, "Wake up, and so I did; and if I wasn't a-settin' in a empty bathin' machine, with a man and a lantern at the door, and says, "Wotever are you a-doin' 'ere? as would 'ave been washed out to sea if I 'adn't come with the 'orse to draw the machine 'igher up."

I says, "Where am I?"

"Why," he says, "on the sands, jest by Pegwell Bay with the tide comin' in."

"Why, then," I says, "that's a good man, draw me up on dry land, and let me set myself to rights, for I must get back to Margit to-night, and 'ave

'ad my clothes shook off my back, thro' a donkey runnin' away."

"Oh!" he says, "then you're the old lady as there's been all the hue and cry about, as your friends is arf distracted about, a-thinkin' as the donkey 'ad took to sea and drowneded you, cos he were found with the saddle turned under 'is belly."

I says, "My good man, say stomick, if you please, in talkin' to a lady, and get me a shay, or somethink in the way of a convenience, as can take me to the rail."

He says, "Your friends is all up above, and you can walk as far as that."

I says, "I doubts it," for I couldn't, not with all the pins and strings as I could find, keep my things on, so I sent that man to say as I was safe, and ask 'em to send me a shawl; and in about ten minutes there come down young Pulbrick and Mrs. Padwick, as flowed into my harms, a-burstin' into tears, and saying, "We've been arf mad all the evenin' a-searchin' for you, and Mrs. Blinden, she's gone to the magistrate, and Miss Pilkinton, she's been a mask of hysterics ever since young Pulbrick come in with your 'air on the end of 'is stick.

So she set to work and did me up some'ow, and got me to a fly, and jest as we was a-startin', up come that donkey man and said as I wasn't a-goin' without a-payin' for 'is donkey, as was seven 'ours;

for I'd let 'im go, and he'd been and got arf way to Deal, as is where 'is family come from. Young Pulbrick squared it with 'im some'ow, and they got me 'ome in the fly to Mrs. Blinden's lodgings, as we'd come over to spend the day with at Ramsgit, as she's a-stoppin' at, thro' 'er dorter a-considerin' Margit low, as is stuck-up rubbish, in my opinion.

A night's rest set me up, and young Pulbrick, he's a-stoppin' at Margit, so he went and told Brown not to expect me till the next day, as when he see me he says, "I tell you wot it is, Martha, if you will go a-larkin' at your time of life you'll come to a untimely hend, as won't look well on your tombstone, nor yet in the papers, neither."

I says, "Brown, you didn't ought to be illudin' to my tombstone when we're out a-pleasurin, not as I'm one to forget the latter hend of heverythink, partikler with this 'ere Comet a-'angin' over my 'ead; but as to bein' in the papers, I ain't afeard of that, for they won't take no notice of me as long as I be'aves like a lady, as is my 'abits, not but wot there's wipers everywhere, even at Margit, as will speak agin you, as I've found a snake in the grass, as the sayin' is, even at Margit. But law, no one can't escape the effects of calermel, as is a thing I don't 'old with nowheres, and is partikler dangerous at the sea-side, as 'ave its drawbacks. But I do love it, for tho' I've been

to a many places as is called forrin parts, but none on 'em a patch on Margit, as the sayin' is; and 'owever it is as Queen Wictorier don't go there, as would cheer 'er up a bit, poor dear, like her late lamented grandpa King George did use to, I can't think, as danced in the 'Sembly Rooms often, with 'is 'ead cut over the grate to this werry day, but only along with Queen Charlotte in course, for he wasn't never one for to go a-galli-wantin' about, leastways not as a married man, not but what there's young ladies there as any married man might dance with, thro' bein' the fust families in Margit, as dances in them rooms, as I've see 'em myself, dressed that lovely as looked the princess all over as any king might dance with, and some of their ma's that majesty way with 'em, as might 'ave been took for Queen Wictorier 'erself, not but what 'er dancin' days, like my own, is over, as the sayin' is, for I don't think you'd ketch 'er a-dancin', as I do not consider as it looks well in a grandma to be a-standin' up in a low dress, with a bare back cut out, and short sleeves, the same as I see Mrs. Summers myself at the Licensed Wittlers' ball, with 'er three married daughters and nine grandchildren, as shows as time is a-creepin' on with us all.

What I likes in Margit is as you can jest please yourself, and I'm sure Mrs. Blewly, where I've lodged

these three years, is a woman as I should 'ave said you might trust with untold tea-caddies, not to mention candles and cold meat, with your jintes as safe as the bank, as the sayin' is.

She's a kind 'art tho' weak, is Mrs. Blewly, and one as 'ave supped sorrers by the ladlefull, as the sayin' is, but not one for to set down to repine, tho' a constant tear a-standin' in the corner of 'er eye, as they do say come from a tho'ro' draft, as stopped the passage ; as I knowed a lady myself near the Old Kent Road, with a silver pipe a-leadin' into 'er nose for to draw it off, as was brought on entire thro' a-breathin' the whitelead works that constant next door, bein' that deleterous, but yet a fortune to be made at it, the same as the dog-biscuit line, as parties is well known to 'ave set up a carridge on, tho' some do say a little smugglin' throwed in, thro' a-supplyin' the Navy.

I'm sure if I'd been the Princess Charlotte come to life agin, as 'er picter 'angs in Mrs. Blewly's parlor, thro' bein' born at Claremont, there couldn't 'ave been more fuss made about me than Mrs. Blewly did, as 'ad 'ad 'er 'ouse cleaned from top to toe, as the sayin' is ; with the tea-things laid, and the kettle a-bilin', as in a gen'ral way relishes a scrump with myself, and a cottage loaf and fresh butter, with some cold 'am as looked delicious, tho' I didn't take nothink but a thin slice of bread and butter.

Not 'avin' come by boat, but only from Ramsgit, as I left all of a 'urry, I was quite ready for my tea at five, thro' it being on the stroke, as me and Mrs. Blewly took together, for I can't a-bear nothink solingtary myself; and we was a-settin' a-lookin' at the sea, as is wisible to the naked heye if you puts your 'ead out of the winder and looks straight up the street, as 'er 'ouse is in far enuf, as is better than quite facin', for the wind is that 'igh as open the winder you dursn't, let alone the bathin' as comes too close when the tide's in.

When we'd done tea, I says to Mrs. Blewly as I should like a little turn, as said she'd go with me with pleasure; so I goes into the back parlour, as is my bed-room, tho' I can't say as I likes the ground floor in a gen'ral way, for to put my bonnet on, as I never were one to be long over, and out I comes, and off we starts.

When we'd got into the street, Mrs. Blewly says to me, "But you ain't told me, now, whatever brought you over from Ramsgit in such a bustle, as 'ave only been there three days, and did not expect you, 'avin' 'eard say as should stop a week, if not ten days."

I says, "Mrs. Blewly, mum, I will not deceive you, thro' not bein' the character to do it, nor yet a 'art for fals'oods framed, as the sayin' is, but," I says, "I don't care 'ow 'umble, but I must be

clean; and if ever a woman took to drink on the quiet, it's Mrs. Sholders, as don't mind 'em, tho' she is Mrs. Padwick's own blood relation; as in course I would not speak agin, as might make things unpleasant, and me prove my words, and have it brought in deformation of character, as did used to be standin' in a white sheet at the church door, with a candle in your 'and; as I remembers well 'appened at Islinton Church many years ago, the werry Sunday as my Aunt Barbara were married, as 'ad to be smuggled out at the westry, thro' the crowd a-bungin' up all the entrances, and a-defyin' the werry beadle to 'is face."

Says Mrs. Blewly to me, "Mrs. Brown, mum, your suppersitions is well foundered, as the sayin' is, as is aperient thro' 'er nose, as I've watched a-growin' on 'er these two years, in comin' 'ere on the yott, and 'er appetite a mere nothink, the very last season as she lodged with me, and gettin' more bloatered every day."

I says, "No, Mrs. Blewly, for tho' we've parted in words, I will not 'ave 'er nose throwed in 'er face, as runs in the family all down the mother's side, and yet a more temperature lot you wouldn't meet in a day's walk; but," I says, "it's disease, as I've knowed cases on afore, and more than one lady as 'ave been led to drink thro' them fashionable doctors a-givin' them stimylents, as is nothink

more nor less than rum punch in effervescent draughts, as is very inticin' to a thirsty soul; not as I considers that any escuse for 'er a-sayin' as it was me as finished that bottle of brandy the night as we was rescued from a watery grave in Ramsgit 'arbour, a-settin' up with Mrs. Padwick, as it took six sailors to bring 'er ashore 'eels fust."

"Law," says Mrs. Blewly, "what that violent in 'er liquor?"

"No," I says, "she ain't one to drink, but only convulsed thro' sea water, as we was both drenched in, and I do believe 'ave undermined 'er constitution, and shall never forget that night not to my dying day, whether sooner or later, as the sayin' is."

Well, while we was a-walkin' on, a-talkin' friendly like, a young feller passes by all of a 'urry, and runs in front, and a-turnin' to look at me that 'ard, as I says, "I 'opes you'll know me next time, impidence."

He says, "Oh yes, I could swear to you anywheres," and on he walks very sharp, and, in course, I didn't take no more notice, and was a goin' on a-tellin' Mrs. Blewly 'ow Mrs. Sholders 'ad turned on me like a lamb in the wilderness, as the sayin' is, and accused me of takin' that brandy, as she said she'd watched me thro' a crack in the door, a-settin' up in bed a-tipplin' the bottle up,

and Mrs. Padwick 'ad told 'er, as in course were 'er lightheadedness, thro' no doubt the sea-water a-weakenin' 'er brain.

Well, we'd been a-settin' on the fort, and I jest then I says, "I feels it a little chilly, thro' the air a-blowin' fresh thro' my musling, and I thinks, Mrs. Blewly, as we'll go in, as shall relish my bit of supper, thro' nothink with my tea as were pickled salmon, and I do 'ope you'll pick a bit with me, Mrs. Blewly."

She said as she were agreeable, and 'ome we went, a-takin' it easy, and when we got in, the gal says to me, "Please, mum, your things is come, as the carrier 'ave left, and I got 'im to put the big box in your room."

I says, "What big box?"

She says, "The black one."

I says, "Call that a big box, child, why it's a mere nothink."

So bein' tired, I takes off my bonnet in the settin'-room, and me and Mrs. Blewly set down to pick a bit, and 'adn't 'ardly begun, when there comes a thump at the door enuf to bring your 'art in your mouth, as the sayin' is.

I says, "Whoever can that be a-knockin' like all the duns in creation, at this time o'night," and jest then we 'eard the gal a-sayin' somethink, and the next moment she busts open the door, with a

perliceman a follerin' 'er right into the room, along with that young man as 'ad stared at me in the street, as I says, a-pinting to me, "There she I give 'er in charge."

I says, "Whatever for?"

"Why," says the perlice, "this 'ere young gent says as you're the party as 'ave robbed 'is mother, as was your lodgin's at Ramsgit, and 'ave come over 'ere to get off by the train; only he's nabbed you."

I says, "Go along with your rubbish, it's the young fellow's larks, I never see 'im in my life afore, nor 'is mother neither."

"Well," he says, "larks or no larks, he's give you in charge."

I says, "Give me in charge—rubbish!"

"Yes," says the young feller, a-chimin' in, "my mother, as is Mrs. Slopley, as you knows well, sent me word to stop you, thro' bein' a prentise 'ere, as 'ave carried off two pillers, a blanket, let alone a lot of things as was all in the cupboard where you slep' "

I says, "There's nothink in that room as I'd touch with a pair of tongs, as the sayin' is; and am sorry as they should be brought into a decent 'ouse."

Says the perlice, "It's soon settled, let's search the boxes."

I says, "With pleasure," and jumps up, and goes into that back room, and there I sees a big box, like a sea chest, and I says, "That's never mine."

So the perlice he opens it, with a wrench, and of all the disgraceful sights as ever met the 'uman eye, it was them contents.

Says the young feller, "All my mother's property, as I can swear to."

"Yes," I says, "and anyone else."

Says Mrs. Blewly, a-whimperin', "Oh, Mrs. Brown, 'owever could you? and such filthy dirty things."

I says, "Mrs. Blewly, surely you ain't a-goin' to turn agin me, like a serpint in the wilderness, as the sayin' is." I says, "That's no box of mine."

"But," says the perlice, "'ere's your name and address on it."

I says, "I don't know how it come there, for," I says "I never set eyes on that big box afore."

"Oh," says the young feller, "that won't do; that's my mother's property as you've been and carried off."

I says, "If it's your mother's take it, in welcome, fur it's none of mine, as wouldn't 'arbour sich a dirty beast of a thing, as looks more like vermin than anythink else."

"Yes," says the perlice, "that's all werry well, but 'ow come you by it?"

I says, "I ain't no consumption, for," I says, "I left Ramsgit in a 'urry, thro' a few words with a friend, and told the woman who was a-doin' for us, thro' the landlady bein' out, for to send my boxes over 'ere by the carrier, as I left directions wrote out."

"Yes," says the young feller, "mother 'ad gone over to Pegwell Bay for a 'our or two along with my sisters, thro' a-losin' a aunt suddin, and when she come 'ome, found as you'd been and lewanted while 'er back were turned without a-payin' your lodgin's, and carried off 'er property."

I says, "I see thro' it all, as is that Mrs. Sholders' mallis and 'atred thro' me a-findin' 'er out in liquor, and a tellin' Mrs. Padwick, as went 'ome at once by rail; and also a-sayin' as I should consider it my dooty for to let Sholders know as she were too fond of a drop behind 'is back, as brought on words that wiolent, as made me leave in a 'urry, but well a-knowin' as Mrs. Padwick and me 'ad paid the rent, and everythink to that fieldmale, for woman I won't call 'er, as would be silin' my lips, as the sayin' is, as 'ad agreed to settle with Mrs. Slopley."

Well, there was a pretty how-d'ye-do, with Mrs. Blewly a-goin' on as she wouldn't 'ave 'ad such a

thing 'appen in 'er 'ouse, as did used to know Mrs. Slopely once, but 'ad 'ad a wiolet quarrel and not spoke over two years, thro' a gal as lived with 'er a-repeatin' things, and would say she were a receiver, as is wuss than a thief, as the sayin' is.

Well, at last my temper got that put out, as I couldn't stand it no longer, so I says to 'er, "Do leave off that 'owlin' do ;" and I says to the perlice, "Take me and the box over tō Ramsgit, and we'll soon settle it, as we can ketch the train tho' late." So I puts on my bonnet, and says to the gal, "Get a man and barrer, as won't mind a-comin' if paid, tho' in 'is bed pre'aps," and give the gal a shillin' for 'erself, and says to Mrs. Blewly, "Please for to mention the price of this tea and supper, as you're welcome to the rest on, as is a false friend, and never will I darken your doors agin, as must be a born idjot to believe as I'd take to stealin' any-think, let alone such filth as this ;" and out of the 'ouse I walks, a-layin' down 'arf-a-crown on the table, as in course could 'ave claimed a week's rent, as in my flurry I never thought on.

I was dreadful upset, but 'urried on, and we caught a train as got into Ramsgit afore ten, and if anyone 'ad told me as I could 'ave got up them steps as leads to Mrs. Slopely's 'ouse that quick as I did, I shouldn't never 'ave credited 'em.

As to the perliceman as follered close on my 'eels, he stared agin, and told me as I were a reg'lar Deerfoot, as made me give 'im one of my looks thro' not 'oldin' with no free ways.

When we got near the 'ouse, I says to 'im, "Let me go in fust, as I should like to 'ear what that wile 'ussey 'ave got to say, and," I says, "you wait 'ere till the man comes with the boxes," as 'ad to come round, as couldn't be wheeled up them steps, and that young feller 'ad stuck to his mother's property.

I goes up to the door, as there is three steps up to the parler winder, as is a sort of a bow wide open, and I could 'ear Mrs. Slopely and Mrs. Sholders a-talkin' and larfin' over their supper, and one, as were Mrs. Slopely's woice says, "I wonder 'ow she'll like bein' locked up all night, an old porpus, as I told the boy not to give 'er in charge till dark."

Says Mrs. Sholders, a-speakin' thick, "I'll teach 'er to try and set my own flesh and blood agin me, as is my own aunt, with a nice little property to leave; and that old double-faced cat, a reg'lar legersy 'unter."

I couldn't stand that, so I pulls the blind a one side, and puts my 'ead in at the winder, and says, "Matilda Sholders, I wonder you ain't afeard to utter sich black false'oods."

She give a scream and starts back, as upset 'er cheer, and away she went backwards, a-clutchin' at the table-cloth for to save 'erself, as pulled the 'ole lot on to 'er, and put out the lights, as was only burnin' a couple of dips.

Mrs. Slopley, as 'ad 'er back to me, give a 'awful scream, as brought up the perlice, as thought as I'd been and fired into the room or somethink, but 'avin' of 'is bull's-eye with 'im, as he throwed into the room, he see there weren't murder, and jest then a party come up with a light, as were the charwoman, for all the lodgers was gone, and no wonder, for they was drove away, and that were the real reason as Mrs. Padwick 'ad left, as can't sleep with one near 'er, and as to me, the three nights as I were in the place, it's a wonder as there was anythink left of me, as was wot first brought on words with me and Mrs. Sholders, as backed up Mrs. Slopley's dirty ways.

So when we'd got a light and picked up Mrs. Sholders, she began a-weepin' and a-wailin', a-sayin' as I were like a mother to 'er, and as she'd never 'arm me nor mine; and as to Mrs. Slopley, she were as white as a sheet, and said it were all a mistake, for that charwoman up and spoke like a lady, a-sayin' as Mrs. Sholders 'ad told 'er to give that large box to the carrier, as put the address on it 'erself.

Well in course the perlice looked werry foolish, and so did that young feller, as I says, "Well, perlice, I've got your number and shall persecute the lot for a label, as this good lady (a-meaning the charwoman) can bear witness to seein' 'em put it on the box, as is a regular consperasy, as I'll 'ave the law on, a couple of wipers as shall be nameless 'ere," and out of the place I walks, and thro' 'avin' my things on the barrer, got the perlice to recommend me a werry genteel lodgin', as were a widder lady's parlors, as clean as print and nice as a new pin, as the sayin' is, as got me a little refreshments as I required afore goin' to bed.

So that's 'ow it were as I come to drop Mrs. Blewly and Margit, not as I ever takes to Ramsgit the same, tho' in course it were a 'arber of refuse for me, as the sayin' is; but parties is a deal too genteel there for me, as likes a land of liberty, as Margit is and always was, and I 'opes ever will be; and if I was Queen Wictorier I'd 'ave a pallis built upon the fort, and enjoy myself on the quiet, as no doubt she would, poor dear, if she could do as she liked, and knowed what real enjoyment means, as the name for is Margit, all the world over.

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